



CITY OF AGRA UNDER THE MUGHALS FROM 1526-1707

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

Agra, a historically important town situated on the banks of the river Yamuna, reached the zenith of its importance when it was the capital of the Mughal Empire, during the 16th and 17th centuries. It now completes a popular tourist triangle spanning Delhi and Jaipur. Agra is situated 200 km south of Delhi, and is easily accessible by road, air as well as the Indian Railways.

Situated in the heart of Agra is 'Taj'. The former President of U.S.A once remarked, "There are two kinds of people in the world. Those who have seen the Taj Mahal and love it and those who have not seen the Taj and love it." And those words ring true for Taj Mahal lovers, the world over. Sitting in the presence of the Taj Mahal is a magical experience. Watching the sun rise over the Taj Mahal is like watching the genesis of a miracle. Seeing the sun disappear behind its large dome is the perfect way to end a special day. Sitting silently in the courtyard of the Taj, or in one of its large halls you can't help but experience a strong feeling of wonder. And then you understand the hallowed ground it occupies amongst the seven other wonders of the world.

Looking back in time and sifting through the annals of history, the importance of Agra could never be undermined. When Mughals came to India, Delhi was the most important town of that period. The Delhi sultans had ruled from there and also learnt its importance. Agra was in the limelight for the first time in medieval history when Sikandar Lodhi, the ruler of Delhi, decided to shift his capital from Delhi to Agra in the 16th century, with the aim of conquering Doab. Under his successor Ibrahim Lodi, Agra continued to be the capital. Babur the first Mughal Emperor captured Agra and made it his capital. Later, Agra witnessed large-scale developmental work and it was at its zenith during the rule of Akbar and Shah Jahan.

This thesis of 'City of Agra under the Mughals from 1526-1707' tries to cover every aspect of Agra under the Mughals. We find that Agra developed into a huge canvas depicting the glorious days of Mughal rule in India. It tuned into one of the most important cities in the northern part of ancient India. The Mughals lived and reigned in India from 1526 to 1858 AD. Their dynasty was the greatest, richest and longest-lasting Muslim dynasty to rule India. This dynasty produced the finest and most elegant arts and architecture in the history of Muslim dynasties.

Even though the Mughal Empire existed 300-500 years ago, its influence still exists in current day India. The social aspects of the Mughal Empire and India today especially relate including family life, religion art, music, and literature, education. Regions of Mughal authority lasted longer than the empire itself. Even the British used Mughal titles and engaged in rituals of respect for the Mughal emperor until 1802. This resilient authority came from the fact that regions had changed fundamentally as political territories under Mughal supremacy. The process of change combined elements drawn from many sources. Most importantly, however, an elite imperial society imbued with Indo-Persian culture had emerged in all the Mughal regions.

Chapter I deals with the historical origin of Agra. It has a rich historical back-ground, which is amply evident from its vibrant Culture, Art and Religious philosophies that have enriched mankind and shaped human thought over centuries. The foundation of the imperial capital can be traced in the epic age. Agra is an old city and it is said that its name was derived from Agrabana, a forest that finds mention in the epic Mahabharata.

The Mughal Dynasty is a line of Muslim emperors who reigned in India from 1526 to 1858. Babur, the first Mughal emperor, was a descendant of the Turkish conqueror Timur on his father's side and of the Mongol (in Persian, Mughal) conqueror Genghis Khan on his mother's side. He invaded India from Afghanistan and founded the Mughal Empire on the ruins of the Delhi Sultanate.

Despite their illustrious ancestors, the Mughals began humbly. When the great Mughal conqueror, Babur, came to power in AD 1483, he ruled over a very small kingdom in Turkestan. With the smallest of armies, he managed to conquer first Afghanistan and then the Delhi Sultanate and this led to the foundation of the Mughal rule in India.

Faced with overwhelming odds, he fought the decisive battle of Panipat in AD 1526 against Ibrahim Lodhi with an army of only twelve thousand men. But, popularly called Babur the Tiger, he overcame his enemies with a new technology; firearms. For this reason, Western historians have dubbed the Mughal Empire, the first gunpowder empire.

Before his death in AD 1530, he had almost conquered the entire India and laid the foundation of a dynasty, which was to change the course of history. He was succeeded by his son, Humayun, but he failed to keep one of the largest empires in the world intact. He had to live most of his life in exile and had to face several rebellions. When he died in AD 1556, he had lost nearly two-third of his kingdom. The task of finishing the reconquest fell to his son and successor, Akbar, whose name means in Arabic, 'The Great.'

Muslim, Indian, and Western historians all see Akbar as the greatest ruler of Indian history. There was not a single field in which he did not show his excellence. By the time he died in 1605, his Empire was greater than that of Babur and included almost all of northern India. The Mansabdari System was the back bone of his administration. A large part of Akbar's administrative efforts were in winning over Hindu populations and this he did successfully.

Akbar was succeeded by, Jahangir, who ruled the empire from AD 1605 to AD 1628. The period of Jahangir's tenure as Emperor is considered the richest period of Mughal culture. Jahangir's successor, Shah Jahan ruled from AD 1628 to AD 1658. One

of his major innovations was moving the capital from Agra to Delhi and he was also one of the greatest builders of Mughal Dynasty. Shah Jahan was succeeded by Aurangzeb in AD 1658 and ruled for a long period up to AD 1707. Mughal Empire expanded to its greatest limits under his tenure but his orthodoxy brought the downfall of the empire. He insisted that the Shariah become the law of the land. Individual states, especially those ruled by Hindu kings, rebelled against the new policies, but the most serious opposition came from two groups: the Marathas and the Sikhs.

After the death of Aurangzeb in AD 1707, the empire was divided and formed into many independent and semi-independent states. In AD 1739, Nadir Shah of Iran attacked Delhi, and this was followed by the attack of Ahmad Shah Abdali and soon the fragility of the power of the Mughals led to the declaration of independence by the vassal states.

In spite of all these, the Mughals ruled the country till 1857 mostly as puppet governments of the East India Company, which was making its presence felt in the country. The end of Mughal rule in India came when the soldiers who led the rebellion of 1857 marched to Delhi and announced the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah II, as the ruler of India. The rebellion was soon crushed and Bahadur Shah Zafar was deported to Myanmar by the East India Company. Thus putting an end to a dynasty, which rewrote the history of a nation.

This chapter gives detail account of these rulers and from 1556 upto 1707, Mughals rule expanded to cover nearly all of the present India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. However from Akbar to Aurangzeb, the Mughals rule had moved from one pole to another in its policies of religious tolerance and relations with its subordinate rulers. Akbar had consolidated the Mughal rule and expanded it through diplomacy, warfare, matrimonial alliance, and a tolerant religious policy. The Mughal Empire continued to expand under his successors Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. From Aurangzeb's time a decline set in. Aurangzeb had ruled over the largest expanse of the

Mughals till date. After his death, the Mughal rule declined, and many regional kingdoms came up.

Regarding the administration the Mughal kingdom of Agra, though founded in 1526, first grew to imperial dimensions under Akbar. Babur's four years in India were spent in fighting and consolidating his gains. Babur's description of the country, as he found it, and his account of every class of people, clearly gives an idea of the condition in which the Mughals entered the country and the material with which they had to deal. Babur had no time for any reconstruction. Humayun got no chance to make a start in that direction. The old system continued under them. The defeat and expulsion of Humayun and his reconquest of the country emphasized the ephemeral character of the dynasties and further brought to light the result of lack of unity among the ruling section. The changes began to be introduced by Akbar and therefore the death of his father Humayun (1556) has been chosen as the starting date for the study of Mughal administration.

From the evidence we have it appears that the administration of Agra was organized on the same pattern as the other subas of the empire, with this difference, that when the emperor was at Agra, no separate governor functioned in the suba. Also the qila'dar of the Agra fort was appointed only during the absence of the emperor. In this chapter our effort is directed towards describing the administrative structure of Agra on the basis, as far as possible, of specific evidence on and about it at the possible cost of reception of much that is well known in respect of Agra's administration in general. There is yet some benefit to be obtained from establishing that the pattern followed in Agra was the same as elsewhere.

The administrative divisions of the Mughal were based on political as well as economical conditions. The country was broadly divided into Mughal India proper and subordinate states, enjoying varying degrees of independence. The provinces varied greatly in status according to their extent and resources or military and strategic importance. A comparison of their revenue also helps us in forming estimate of the grade

of the provinces. Then they were senior and junior grades within the major class of provinces. Lastly, the strategic position of a province determined its status and importance.

Akbar's central government consisted of four departments, each presided over by a minister: the prime minister (wakil); finance minister (dewan, or wazir); paymaster general (mir bakhshi); and the chief justice and religious official combined (sadr us-sudur). They were appointed, promoted, or dismissed by the emperor, and their duties were well defined.

The Empire was divided into 15 provinces—Allahabad, Agra, Ayodhya (Avadh), Ajmer, Ahmadabad, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Malka, Qhandesh, Berar, and Ahmadnagar. Kashmir and Qandahar were districts of the province of Kabul. Sindh, then known as Thatta, was a district in the province of Multan. Orissa formed a part of Bengal. The provinces were not of uniform area or income. There were in each province a governor, a dewan (revenue and finance officer), a bakhshi (military commander), a sadr (religious administrator), and qazi (judge) and agents who supplied information to the central government. Separation of powers among the various officials (in particular, between the governor and the dewan) was a significant operating principle in imperial administration.

The provinces were divided into districts (sarkars). Each district had a fowjdar (a military officer whose duties roughly corresponded to those of a collector); a qazi; a kot-wal, who looked after sanitation, police, and administration; a bitikchi (head clerk); and a khazanedar (treasurer).

Every town of consequence had a kōtwal. The village communities conducted their affairs through pañcayats (councils) and were more or less autonomous units.

Unlike many of the earlier invaders, the Mughals were relatively more conscious of being in a foreign land, and in 'Babur Nama' Babur spoke very deliberately

of the need for conducting a secular policy in a country that was predominantly non-Islamic. In this respect, the Mughals were much more aware of the need to gain legitimacy and to win political allies in an alien land.

The economic position of peasants and artisans did not improve because the administration failed to produce any lasting change in the existing social structure. There was no incentive for the revenue officials, whose concerns primarily were personal or familial gain, to generate resources independent of dominant Hindu zamindars and village leaders, whose self-interest and local dominance prevented them from handing over the full amount of revenue to the imperial treasury. In their ever-greater dependence on land revenue, the Mughals unwittingly nurtured forces that eventually led to the break-up of their empire.

When Babur invaded India to establish his kingdom his army consisted of tribes and clans that followed him from Kabul, some joined him later, after the Battle of Panipat, he awarded the leaders of these tribes and clans in accordance to their performance in the battle and many of them who had joined Babur for the booty, chose to return to their homes.

In this respect, the Mughals were very much in the tradition of the nomadic warrior clans that periodically swooped down from the grasslands and deserts of Central Asia and either plundered and raided the settled agricultural civilizations or succeeded in conquering them. Not only India, but China, Eastern Europe, and the fertile crescents of the Middle East also experienced such attacks and invasions. Since the nomadic hunter clans lacked agricultural territories that could be tapped for their surplus, the only means to wealth in such parts of the globe were raids on settled civilizations or looting or taxation of trade caravans. Trading in slaves was another source of income. Seasoned and practised in the art of warfare, the nomadic warrior clans often prevailed with considerable ease over the armies of the settled civilizations who were usually taken by surprise and were inexperienced at handling the unconventional (and terrorist-like) tactics of the invaders

Babur and Humayun ruled over territory that was not too far flung, after the tribes and the clans that had joined Babur for booty returned after the Battle of Panipat, their place was taken by foreign adventurers, Uzbeks, Persians, Arabs, Turks etc who thronged to the court with contingents of troops. Since the Mughals were foreigners there were no hereditary nobles related to the rulers or ancient families to depend upon, the court consisted of adventurers from different nations, the ruler raised them to dignity or degraded them; up to the early rule of Akbar the Mughal armies consisted of contingents commanded by these adventurers.

An important aspect of the Mughal rule was the creation of a military-bureaucratic system named the Mansabdari system. Though the system itself underwent various transformations depending on the circumstances, the characteristic feature was a single hierarchy that took within its fold both the military and the civilian bureaucracy. This way, the empire was primarily a police state.

Akbar, organised the 'mansabdari' system in the 19th year of his rule. The system classified the functionaries of the kingdom as fighters, 'ashab-u's-saif', (masters of the sword); clerks 'ashab-u'l-qalam' (masters of the pen); theologians, 'ashab-u'l-aramah'. The 'mansab' denoted a rank of office, it had its obligations, precedence and grade of pay; it was for life but it was not hereditary, heirs could not demand continuity of office.

Military mansabdars were required to maintain troops according to the mansab including beasts of burden, elephants, camels, mules, carts etc, they maintained horses for their troopers and a prescribed number in their own stables.

Military command was at the will of the emperor, Akbar held that anyone could be a military commander and often appointed commanders who had no military knowledge or experience.

With a corrupt system of accounting and inspection very few mansabdars kept their units up to strength. When a mansabdar was ordered to take part in an

expedition, he was required to parade his unit outside the palace and the emperor inspected it from a window in the palace.

Cavalry made up the bulk of the Mughal army; they enjoyed the prestige of warriors. Individual troopers took great care to keep themselves fit, they exercised, engaged each other in mock fights, practised horsemanship, they were personally brave and trained themselves for person to person combat, but were unwilling to endanger their mounts because their salary depended on these; there was no training for units to act collectively.

Infantry was despised as drudges, they were considered little more than watchmen to guard the baggage, labourers, porters etc. The infantry consisted of matchlock men and archers, in the ratio of one matchlock man to four archers because of the greater rate of fire of the archers since both weapons had about the same effective range; there was no infantry training, no discipline and very little reliance was placed on them.

Several aspects of their policy illustrate the importance of their military campaigns. Capitals were frequently moved to centres more suited to the conduct of specific military campaigns. Alliances with Rajput rulers were sought based on their ability to contribute to the Mughal war efforts. Investments were made in upgrading the weapons of war and ensuring that Mughal military technology maintained its edge. Every Mughal prince was groomed in the battle arts not only through early training but through hands-on experience in real battles. So entrenched was the culture of war that it pit brother against brother in battles of succession.

This concentration on war efforts emerges quite vividly from court chronicles and surviving correspondence between Shahjahan and the young Aurangzeb where almost nothing else is discussed but the progress of the latest war effort. War scenes and gory depictions of battles were also common themes in the miniatures commissioned during the reign of Akbar.

The militarist character of the Mughals was not entirely unexpected since had they not been steeped in the tradition of warfare, they would have never attempted to

conquer Northern India and extend their control over the rest of the Indian subcontinent in the first place.

Many features of the Mughal administrative system were adopted by Great Britain in ruling India, but the most lasting achievements of the Mughals were in the field of architecture, painting and music. Architecture, reached the pinnacle of its glory under the Mughals. Although Babur's stay in India was brief, and he was preoccupied with the conquest of the country, he found time to summon from Constantinople pupils of the great Ottoman architect Sinan, to whom he entrusted the construction of mosques and other buildings. Time has dealt harshly with buildings constructed in his reign and that of Humayun, and only four minor ones have survived. These buildings exhibit no trace of local influence and are distinctly foreign.

Akbar's most ambitious project was his new capital and the numerous buildings at Fathpur Sikri, the seat of the imperial court from 1569 to 1584. Some of the buildings there are dominated by the Hindu style of architecture, reflecting the emperor's regard for the Hindu tradition. But Persian influences were equally strong in his day, as can be seen in the magnificent tomb for Humayun built early in 1569 at Delhi. Akbar's efforts were not confined to tombs, mosques, and palaces, but included fortresses, villas, towers, sarais, schools, and reservoirs or tanks. He built two major fortresses at Agra and Lahore. The Lahore fort, which was built on the banks of the Ravi, at about the same time as that at Agra, was planned and constructed on practically the same grand scale. The buildings within the Lahore fort were greatly altered by Shah Jahan and later by the Sikhs, but much remains in the original form. A striking feature of the fort is the carved decoration, representing living things. This may indicate merely the predominance of Hindu craftsmen, and a lax overseer, but more likely it can be ascribed to Akbar's own predilections.

Akbar's death in 1605 was followed by a pause in building activities of the Mughals. Jahangir, was less interested in architecture than in painting and gardens. Akbar's tomb at Sikandar and some other buildings were constructed during his reign, but

Jahangir's greatest contribution was in laying out the large formal gardens which adorn many cities of Kashmir and the Punjab. The Mughal garden is a regular arrangement of squares, usually in the form of terraces placed on a slope (for easy distribution of water), with pavilions at the centre. Artificial pools with numerous fountains form an important part of the plan, and the flagged causeways are shadowed by avenues of trees. Babur and Akbar had made a beginning in this direction, but during Jahangir's reign a number of lovely gardens came into existence, such as the Shalamar Bagh and the Nishat in Kashmir. Jahangir's beautiful mausoleum at Shahdara near Lahore was probably planned by the emperor himself, but it was completed in the next reign, by his widow Nur Jahan. It suffered serious damage in the reign of Ranjit Singh, when the marble pavilion in front of the building, which offered a central point of interest, was removed. It cannot be fairly judged after the spoliation by the Sikhs, and in any case it lacks many noble features of the Taj Mahal, but even now it is a beautiful building, decorated by inlaid marbles, glazed tiles, and painted patterns. Not far from Jahangir's resting place Nur Jahan lies buried in a very unpretentious tomb.

Shah Jahan was the greatest builder amongst the Mughals. One secret of his success was the liberal use of marble. He replaced many sandstone structures of his predecessors in the forts of Agra and Lahore and other places with marble palaces. This change in the material itself facilitated a corresponding change in architectural treatment. Rectangular forms gave way to curved lines, and the art of the marble cutter gave a new grace and lightness to the decoration. The style of Shah Jahan's principal edifices is basically Persian, but is distinguished by the lavish use of white marble, minute and tasteful decoration—particularly the open-work tracery which ornaments the finest buildings, giving them their distinctive elegance. Among the more famous of his buildings are the Pearl Mosque and the Taj Mahal at Agra, the Red Fort and Jama Masjid at Delhi, palaces and gardens at Lahore, a beautiful mosque at Thatta in Sind, a fort, palace, and mosque at Kabul, royal buildings in Kashmir, and many edifices at Ajmer and Ahmadabad.

Aurangzeb was not a great builder, but among buildings of merit erected in his reign is the great Badshahi Mosque of Lahore, completed in 1674. Its construction was supervised by Fidai Khan Kuka, Master of Ordnance, whose engineering skill and experience enabled him to design and erect a building of great size and stability. It is one of the largest mosques in the subcontinent, if not in the world. There is a great dignity in its broad quadrangle leading up to the facade of the sanctuary. Its ornamentation is boldly conceived, but perhaps representing Aurangzeb's puritanical taste, this is sparingly introduced. For this reason the building suffers in comparison with the Great Mosque at Delhi.

After Shah Jahan Mughal architecture declined even at the capital, although some interesting buildings were erected from time to time. Shah Jahan spent incalculable wealth on his preoccupations: a life of ease, pageantry and pleasure, expeditions to expand his dominion and the creation of his celebrated edifices. Unlike the buildings of Akbar which show such eclectic delight in diversity, Shah Jahan's constructions demonstrate cool confidence in a new order.

In his structures, the Hindu and Islamic traditions are not simply mixed but synthesized in a resolved form – the balance of inlaid ornamentation and unadorned spaces; the cusped arch, neither Islamic nor Hindu; the simplified columns and brackets created without the rich carvings; the kiosks with Islamic domes – typical of the nobility, grace and genius that characterize the constructions of Shah Jahan.

The importance of Agra and Mughal architecture could never be ignored as Agra was once the capital of the Mughal Empire and even today it seems to linger in the past. Not surprising, for the Mughal emperors with their passion for building, endowed the city with some of the finest structures in the world. It is very easy to slip away here through the centuries into the grandeur and intrigues of the Mughal court.

For all the beauty of the embellishments used in the Taj Mahal and his other buildings, it is the stylistic unity and harmony of design that is Shah Jahan's greatest accomplishment, providing the finishing touch in the Mughal style of architecture.

The Mughal Empire at its zenith commanded resources unprecedented in Indian history and covered almost the entire subcontinent. From 1556 to 1707, during the heyday of its fabulous wealth and glory, the Mughal Empire was a fairly efficient and centralized organization, with a vast complex of personnel, money, and information dedicated to the service of the emperor and his nobility. A complete study of Mughal economy, currency and trade is covered in chapter four of the thesis. Study of Mughal economy is very important to understand the Mughals and their reign in Agra of three hundred years. The first two rulers of Mughals were busy trying to establish a firm foothold in India when Akbar came to throne he realised the importance of stable economy.

According to the testimony of European travellers, some of the urban centres of Mughal India were bigger than the biggest cities in Europe at the same period. Most of the luxury handicraft trades were located in cities, and there was also a well-established banking system for the transfer of funds from one part of India to another. In urban society, occupation was controlled by guild regulation and a hereditary caste structure, but occupational mobility was greater than in villages because town life was dominated by Muslims, or, in some commercial areas, by Europeans.

A remarkable feature of the Mughal system under Akbar was his revenue administration, developed largely under the supervision of his famed Hindu minister Todar Mal. Akbar's efforts to develop a revenue schedule both convenient to the peasants and sufficiently profitable to the state took some two decades to implement. In 1580 he obtained the previous 10 years' local revenue statistics, detailing productivity and price fluctuations, and averaged the produce of different crops and their prices. He also evolved a permanent schedule circle by grouping together the districts having homogeneous agricultural conditions. For measuring land area, he abandoned the use of hemp rope in favour of a more definitive method using lengths of bamboo joined with

iron rings. The revenue, fixed according to the continuity of cultivation and quality of soil, ranged from one-third to one-half of production value and was payable in copper coin (*dams*). The peasants thus had to enter the market and sell their produce in order to meet the assessment. The earlier practices (e.g., crop sharing), however, also were in vogue in the empire. The new system encouraged rapid cash nexus and economic expansion. Moneylenders and grain dealers became increasingly active in the countryside.

Akbar made the system of regional control more effective because he developed a lucrative policy of incorporation for his opponents into the Mughal hierarchical administration. He was the first ruler to realize the importance of forging links between the position of the sultan and the chieftains by incorporating them into the imperial hierarchy of administration. Akbar understood that military coercion was not the right method for consolidation. He obtained the empire's revenue through aggressive diplomacy designed to reduce the chieftains' status to intermediaries for the empire, for which they would receive just compensation. The first step in the reductive process was the introduction of the same generic term (*zamindar*) to refer to all of the holders of widely varying types of landed interests. In doing this, Akbar destroyed the pre-existing hierarchy on the local level, as all persons who were previously in that hierarchy were now equal in the community. From autonomous chieftains to village heads, all possessed the same rank in the view of the Mughal Empire.

Akbar did not hesitate to use force to establish his supremacy over some staunch opponents, although diplomacy was preferred. During the beginning of his rule, he would conquer his opponents by whatever means necessary, which included personally leading his army on campaigns of bloody battles and sometimes enduring long devastating sieges. The power of Akbar and his empire came from one important fact: he always won. Later in his rule, many opposing chieftains began to understand the extent of his power, receiving the positive benefits of his incorporation policy by conceding to him without much bloodshed. In Akbar's policy of incorporation, a chieftain's submission brought the possibility for advancement within the imperial bureaucracy.

In study of Indian economic history of the first half of the seventeenth century during the reigns of the Mughal Emperors Jahangir and Shahjahan. This period is important from the standpoint of economic institutions and is marked by certain far-reaching changes which ushered in a new era in the commercial relations of India with the traders from the west.

Departing significantly from existing approaches this work forcefully argues that both the division of the Mughal empire into Subas (provinces) of varying size and potential and the merging of three geographically different regions into Suba Agra were strongly motivated by a desire to carve out a core region for the Empire that surpassed all other units in productivity and at the same time had the territorial reach that enabled it to influence other regions. At the local level, Sarkar divisions were created to contain the Zamindars. It is found that Mughal policies were discriminatory towards erstwhile ruling families like the Bundelas and middle level potentates like the Jats.

Of particular interest are discussions on agro-based industries wherein the level of technological attainment was in no way inferior to that of the nineteenth century. Other issues addressed are trade, and most fascinating of all, the emergence and development of Agra as the centre of one of the most important Empires in history.

The Mughal economy was the most complex and sophisticated to be colonized by Europeans, but its productivity level was significantly below that of Western Europe at the time of conquest in the mid-eighteenth century. Its relative backwardness was partly technological but was mainly due to institutional characteristics which prevented it from making optimal use of its production possibilities. The parasitic state apparatus had an adverse effect on production incentives in agriculture, which was reinforced by the effect of 'built-in depressants' within the village, where there was a further hierarchy of exploitation. Productive investment was negligible and the savings of the economy were invested in precious metals, palaces and tombs. The productivity of the urban economy was also adversely affected by the predatory character of the state.

Mughal rule was the most significant of the various regimes during the medieval times in India. Belonging to Central Asia, which had trade as the major economic activity, Mughals understood the importance of trade. Their main objective in conquering Gujarat, Bengal and Sindh was to gain control over sea-trade. Moreover, they facilitated the development of overland trade routes when they consolidated their control over Kabul and Kandhar. It is significant that many members of the royal family, as well as influential nobles invested substantial sum in overseas trade. Jahangir and his consort Nur Jahan had investment in ships plying between Surat and Red Sea. Ships of Prince Khurram when he was governor of Gujarat had extensive trade with Mocha. Similarly Ships of Prince Dara, and Aurangzeb traded with Aceh and Bantam. Prince Azim-ush-Shan even declared the entire import trade of Bengal as his monopoly. The ships owned by royal members were generally big ships upto thousand tonnes. The influential nobles and governors would try to monopolise the trade through their regions. Nobles like Mir Jumla tried to monopolise trade of saltpetre, and later on Shaista Khan tried to monopolise trade of salt, bees wax and gold in Bengal. On the other hand, the governor of Lahore, Wazir Khan took commission for every transaction at Lahore.

Unlike other contemporary regimes, Mughals did not make trade a royal monopoly. They wished to have a free trade regime in which different trading groups had a fair chance. This was in contrast to different contemporary regimes viz. in Persia under Shah Abbas silk was a royal monopoly, rulers of South East kingdoms made tin, rice etc their royal monopoly, in South Indian kingdom of Travancore, pepper was a royal monopoly. Also in this endeavour to keep free trade regime open, the Mughals faced hostilities from the European trading companies that aimed to monopolise the sea trade. In Asia, the State force did not back up the trading activity through use of coercion. In contrast, the European trading companies used force and coercion to gain supremacy on the sea trade. In such situation, the biggest handicap of the Mughals was that they lacked an effective navy. To counter such threat, the Mughals usually resorted to playing on the differences among these trading companies, and thus ensured that the seaports like Surat were generally open for free trade.

In such situation, they had to face challenges from European companies. Particularly when the Portuguese, and later on the Dutch tried to take control of sea trade. The long term objective of Dutch were to deny Indian ships to SE Asia, and appropriate all trade of Indian items to SE Asia to themselves. The Dutch even blockaded the port of Surat. The Mughals retaliated by confiscating their possessions on land and arresting their agents. However over a period of time the differences and issues got resolved. Similarly, there were issues with the British East India Company over customs duties. However again on this issue, the differences were resolved in the interest of trade and keeping the balance between the different European trading companies.

As there was regional specialisation in production and manufacture of goods there was much scope for exchange of various items. These goods were transported on bullocks, sometimes in caravans of 30,000. These were mainly used for transportation of food grain items. The costlier goods were transported on camels and mules and on carts. Boats were used on river-ways. There was also a well-developed coastal trade. Bengal was famous for sugar and rice, and also for muslin and silk; area of Coromandal coast for textile; Gujarat was the gateway for foreign trade with the West and specialised in textiles and silk; Lahore was a centre of handicraft production; Sarkhej and Bayana were famous for indigo production; Kashmir was important for shawls and carpets. These places were well connected for inland and overseas trade. At local level, there was a well-developed financial market- sarrafs catered to requirements of currency conversion; money transfer was done using hundis, banking and insurance was also well developed. Most of the trading was done with the network of commission agents known as dallals; while the manufacturing had developed a putting out system, known as dadani. Overseas trade and commerce contributed to influx of silver into the empire that led to its economic stability.

The Mughal theory of kingship as it emerged under Akbar, while rooted in the basic pattern laid down by Balban, has important features of its own. In the Mughal system the king remained all-powerful, but he was not an autocrat of Balban's type. The most authoritative exposition of the Mughal theory of rulership is that provided by Abu'l

Fazl, Akbar's closest companion, in his introduction to *Ain-i-Akbari*. The first two paragraphs dealing with the need for a king to maintain order and suppress crime and injustice echo Balban's views on the subject. Then Abu'l Fazl emphasizes the divine elements in kingship: the last part of the work Agra under the Mughals deals with the long lasting social and cultural impact of the Mughals on Indian culture and life.

The Mughal Empire grew out of descendants of the Mongol Empire who were living in Turkestan in the 15th century. They had become Muslims and assimilated the culture of the Middle East, while keeping elements of their Far Eastern roots.

The bureaucracy that the *Ain-i-Akbari* records rested on personal loyalty to the emperor among nobles who held all the places in the empire together. The nobility was the backbone of imperial society, commanding armies financed with taxes from imperial territories. The emperor had the biggest army under his private command, but he could not defeat a substantial alliance of great nobles. Warriors with independent means initially became nobles (*amirs*) by being assigned a rank or dignity (*mansab*) with assignments of salary or income from lands. In 1590, Akbar revised the system to remunerate nobles in proportion to the number of men and horses under their command. This linked imperial rank explicitly to noble military assets. The plan was to create an elite corps of military commanders who maintained the dignity of their aristocratic warrior status through service and loyalty to the emperor.

Akbar's successors made a major departure of from the principle of periodic transfer of jagirdars. Based primarily on Barnier's observation, it has generally been held that jagirdars were not aloud to stay in the one place for very long period, as they were transferred on an average, every three years. In several cases Mughal nobles with high mansabs remain undisturbed in their place of assignment for exceptionally long period. In short stays in the place did not allow a jagirdars sufficient time to work for the development of agriculture and instead made him insensitive to the plight of the producers, there is no single scheme relating to development of agriculture that could be associated with the jagirdars noticed above. Instead, what we see is that the tendency to

remain long in the region as a jagirdar had already taken to root in the seventeenth century. The possibility cannot be ruled out that such period were found adequate by the jagirdars and zamindars to develop a nexus and, thus, deprive the state of increase of revenue generation on various accounts.

These nobles patronized artists, and craftsmen who produced the products exclusively from them. In the Mughal cities of Agra, Delhi, Burhanpur and Lahore, the morphology of urban life was determined by the settlement patterns of the Mughal nobility. Architects, artisans, builders, poets, found permanent employment in the noble entourages. Mughal officials and frequently, their women spent large sums of money for the construction of public buildings i.e. mosques, inns, stone bridges, gardens and markets. The origin of dozen of new towns and villages through out the Mughal India can be traced to the investment by these nobles.

There was considerable disagreement all during the reigns of Babur, Humayun, and Akbar over the nature of monarchy and its place in Islamic society. Many Islamic scholars under Babur and Akbar believed that the Indian monarchies were fundamentally un-Islamic. At the heart of the problem was the fact that none of the invading monarchs were approved by the Caliph, but rather were acting solely on their own. The majority of Islamic scholars, however, concluded that the monarch was divinely appointed by God to serve humanity and that the Indian sultanate or the Mughal *padshah* was acting in the place of the Caliph. ⁶⁸

Even though the Mughal Empire existed 300-500 years ago, its influence still exists in current day India. The social aspects of the Mughal Empire and India today especially relate including family life, religion art, music, and literature, education. Regions of Mughal authority lasted longer than the empire itself. Even the British used Mughal titles and engaged in rituals of respect for the Mughal emperor until 1802. This resilient authority came from the fact that regions had changed fundamentally as political territories under Mughal supremacy. The process of change combined elements drawn

from many sources. Most importantly, however, an elite imperial society imbued with Indo-Persian culture had emerged in all the Mughal regions.

The Mughals also adopted an absolute sovereignty. This particularly took shape during the times of Akbar, when he issued the famous *mazhar* in 1579. By this proclamation, he extended his powers as *Amir i Adil* (just monarch) & *Amir ul Momnin* (leader of faithful) to that of *Imam-i-Adil* (supreme arbiter of Islamic law). Thus Akbar was proclaimed higher in rank than *Mujtahids* (interpreter of Islamic laws eg *Mullahs*). Akbar was not just *Zil-i-Ilahi* (shadow of God on earth), but also, *Farr i Izdi* (divine effulgence / light of God). Thus the Mughal emperor was both the temporal and the spiritual head of his empire.

Babur brought a broadminded, confident Islam from central Asia. His first act after conquering Delhi was to forbid the killing of cows because that was offensive to Hindus. He may have been descended from brutal conquerors, but he was not a barbarian bent on loot and plunder. Instead he had great ideas about civilisation, architecture and administration. He even wrote an autobiography, *The Babur - Namah*. The autobiography is candid, honest and at times even poetic.

Mughal reign during the times of Akbar saw a shift away from the religious orientation of the state. Akbar abolished the *Jizia*, and gave equal opportunities for people of different faiths. He also laid down a policy of *sulh-i-kul*, meaning land of peace and tolerance. By this he not only undermined the influence of the *ulema*, but also laid firm religious policy for the empire that served it well for at least a century. This policy was reversed during the time of Aurangzeb's rule. Akbar also founded a spiritual-religion by the name *din-i-ilahi*; it found only eighteen full time adherents. The Mughal period also witnessed the flowering of the *Bhakti* and the *Sufi* movement in the country.

Though the Mughals had come to India as invaders, they took to this country as their own and settled down here. The liberal religious policy and marriages between the Mughals and Hindu princesses brought a period of understanding between

the people professing the two faiths. It also led to tempering of hostilities that generally characterised the Hindu-Muslim relations during the medieval times. It also led to cooperation between the Mughals and the Rajputs and various other local zamindars and this gave a period of political stability to the people. Thus Mughal rule, at least till the reign of Shah Jahan witnessed a period of relative stability, progress and peace.

Conclusion

One obvious reason for the different tone and spirit of the Mughal Empire is the greater continuity of administration. For three hundred years the same dynasty ruled from India, and for half of this period, from 1556 to 1707, four rulers in direct succession maintained control. This is a remarkable achievement in the dynastic history of any great country, but it is particularly astonishing when measured against the rapid overthrow, not just of rulers, but of dynasties, in the sultanate period. Undoubtedly this dynastic stability contributed to the rich and varied cultural life of the period. The basic reason for the different tone of the two periods is, however, the success of Akbar, the third of the Mughal rulers, in creating an enduring system of administration.

The main Mughal contribution to the south Asia was their unique architecture. Many monuments were built during the Mughal era including the Taj Mahal. The first Mughal emperor Babur wrote in the Babur-nama: "Hindustan is a place of little charm. There is no beauty in its people, no graceful social intercourse, no poetic talent or understanding, no etiquette, nobility or manliness. The arts and crafts have no harmony or symmetry. There are no good horses, meat, grapes, melons or other fruit. There is no ice, cold water, good food or bread in the markets. There are no baths and no madrasas. There are no candles, torches or candlesticks" Fortunately his successors, with fewer memories of the Central Asian homeland he pined for, took a less jaundiced view of Indian culture, and became more or less naturalised, absorbing many Indian traits and customs along the way.

The Mughal period saw a more fruitful blending of Indian, Iranian and Central Asian artistic, intellectual and literary traditions than any other in Indian history. The Mughals had taste for the fine things in life - for beautifully designed artifacts and the enjoyment and appreciation of cultural activities. However, the Hindus of India provided the Mughals with a richer philosophy and the plentiful spices which were incorporated into modern Indian life. While the Mughals' superior position may have been appreciated, in reality, they probably borrowed as much as they gave. However, it could not be doubted that they introduced many changes to Indian society and culture, including:

- Centralised government which brought together many smaller kingdoms
- Persian art and culture amalgamated with native Indian art and culture
- Started new trade routes to Arab and Turk lands
- Mughal cuisine
- Urdu and Hindi languages were formed for common Muslims and Hindus respectively
- A style of architecture
- Landscape gardening

The remarkable flowering of art and architecture under the Mughals is due to several factors. The empire itself provided a secure framework within which artistic genius could flourish, and it commanded wealth and resources unparalleled in Indian history. The Mughal rulers themselves were extraordinary patrons of art, whose intellectual calibre and cultural outlook was expressed in the most refined taste.

All foreign travellers speak of the wealth and prosperity of Mughal cities and large towns. Monserrate stated that Lahore in 1581 was "not second to any city in Europe or Asia." Finch, who travelled in the early days of Jahangir, found both Agra and Lahore to be much larger than London, and his testimony is supported by others. Other cities like Surat ("A city of good quantity, with many fair merchants and houses therein"), Ahmadabad, Allahabad, Benares, and Patna similarly excited the admiration of visitors.

Any generalization about Indian history is dangerous, but the impression one gains from looking at social conditions during the Mughal period is of a society moving towards an integration of its manifold political regions, social systems, and cultural inheritances. The greatness of the Mughals consisted in part at least in the fact that the influence of their court and government permeated society, giving it a new measure of harmony. The common people suffered from poverty, disease, and the oppression of the powerful; court life was marked by intrigue and cruelty as well as by refinement of taste and elegant manners. Yet the rulers and their officials had moral standards which gave coherence to the administration and which they shared to some extent with most of their subjects. Undeniably, there were ugly scars on the face of Mughal society, but the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a quality of life that lent them a peculiar charm. The clearest reflection of this is seen in the creative arts of the period.

The greatness of the Mughal achievement lies in the political unification of India. Some historians have attempted to lay the blame for this Mughal collapse entirely on Aurangzeb's zealotry, contrasting Aurangzeb's religious conservatism with Akbar's eclectic tolerance which led to architectural innovations and cultural synthesis. Admirers of the syncretic traditions that developed in Akbar's court point to the stylistic fusion that took place in Fatehpur Sikri, and how some talented Hindus played an important role in his administration.

But even as Aurangzeb's sectarian messianic tendencies may have been the immediate catalyst for some of the rebellions that triggered the downfall of the Mughal Empire, they should not be seen as the sole explanation for the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. Challenges to Mughal rule had already begun right after Akbar's military successes. And although Aurangzeb identified closely with Islamic orthodoxy - the employment of Hindus in Aurangzeb's court was at a higher level than what prevailed in the court of Akbar. Like his predecessors, Aurangzeb also continued with the practice of seeking alliances with Hindu rulers, but abandoned the practice of developing marital ties with them. Without the bonds of inter-marriage, and with a tax base that was

becoming less stable, the motivations for the Rajputs to fight Mughal battles was waning, and coercion was becoming less effective

The fact that after the death of Aurangzeb no ruler of real vigour and resourcefulness came to the throne made recovery of the lost position almost impossible. Even Aurangzeb's long life was an asset of doubtful value in its last stages. He drove himself hard and resolutely, conscientiously performing his duties, but at the age of ninety he was subject to the laws governing all human machines. When he died, his son and successor Bahadur Shah was already an old man of sixty. He began well but was on the throne for barely six years, and with his death a disastrous chapter opened in Mughal annals.

Directly related to the troubles of this period was the absence of a well-defined law of succession to ensure the continuity of government. The result was that each son of a deceased king felt that he had an equal claim to the crown, and succession to the throne was invariably accompanied by bloody warfare. The disaster was compounded when the imperial princes, who were often viceroys governing vast territories, started making secret pacts with soldiers to ensure their support for the time when the fateful struggle would begin. Soon not only the imperial army but forces external to the empire—the East India Company, the Marathas, the Sikhs—were being used by claimants to the throne of Delhi, as well as to control of the provincial kingdoms. The results were fatal.

As Irfan Habib concludes

"Thus was the Mogul Empire destroyed. No new order was, or could be, created from the force ranged against it... The gates were open to end-less rapine, anarchy and foreign conquest. But the Mogul Empire had been its own gravedigger."

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis “*City of Agra Under the Mughals – 1526-1707*” submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the AMU is a record of the bonafide research carried out by **Ms. Zeba Siddiqui** under my supervision. No part of the thesis has been submitted for award of any degree before.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Prof. Tariq Ahmed, is written above the printed name.

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THESIS

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Dated 23rd December 2006


ZEBA SIDDIQUI

City of Agra under the Mughals from 1526- 1707.

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Introduction

The research study outlined here –viz- ‘The City of Agra under the Mughals from 1526-1707’ is an attempt to bring to light the role of Agra city in the life of Mughals. No period in Indian history has drawn as much attention and scholarly research as has the period in Indian history that corresponds with Mughal rule. Western and many Indian historians alike have focused on the reign of the Mughals almost to the point of total neglect and exclusion of other periods in Indian history.

While the Indianness or foreignness of the Mughals has been quite hotly debated in recent years, one aspect of the history of the Mughals that has largely escaped scholarly attention, has been the role of modernization and cultural developments in shaping the reign of virtually every Mughal ruler up to Aurangzeb.

A state, or any polity, is based primarily on the cooperation, consensual or coerced, that it manages to elicit from its members. To the extent that the polity elicits consensual cooperation from the populace, it is legitimate. However, continued legitimacy is determined by the capacity of the regime to create the bases of its continuance.

A regime exercises three kinds of power and, accordingly, can employ three different kinds of strategies to maintain itself: destructive, productive, and integrative. In their actual implementation, regimes may or may not intentionally use a particular strategy to achieve a particular end.

The question addressed here is: What kinds of strategies or policies would have the consequences, intentional or unintended, of integrating a polity? Four may be identified: institution-building, communication, incentives, and ideology. In this thesis ‘City of Agra under The Mughals, 1526-1707, I have tried to discuss all the strategies adopted by Mughals to establish a stable a stable kingdom in India. They were institution builders, they tried to communicate to the people in many ways, they mixed with the Indians to an extent that their very identity changed.

Akbar is remembered for his tolerant and enlightened, integrative policies. The Mughal rulers united much of India under their control, governed areas that are in 2006 sometimes referred to as ungovernable, and also commanded allegiance in their heyday seems nothing short of a miracle to their modern successors. Just what did those leaders do and why was it successful?

Although war-making was not a uniquely Mughal practice, the centrality of the military campaigns in Mughal decision-making and administration does stand out. In the frequency, scale and intensity of their military campaigns, the Mughals had more in common with the ruling heads of the Delhi Sultanate than is commonly acknowledged.

This is not to say that there weren't important distinctions. Unlike many of the earlier invaders, the Mughals were relatively more conscious of being in a foreign land, and in his memoirs Babur spoke very deliberately of the need for conducting a secular policy in a country that was predominantly non-Islamic. In this respect, the Mughals were much more aware of the need to gain legitimacy and to win political allies in an alien land.

Their taste for the fine things in life - for beautifully designed artifacts and the enjoyment and appreciation of cultural activities also distinguished them from other interlopers who were skilled at war-making and little else. Several aspects of their policy illustrate the importance of their military campaigns. Capitals were frequently moved to centers more suited to the conduct of specific military campaigns. Alliances with Rajput rulers were sought based on their ability to contribute to the Mughal war efforts. Investments were made in upgrading the weapons of war and ensuring that Mughal military technology maintained its edge. Every Mughal prince was groomed in the battle arts not only through early training but through hands-on experience in real battles. So entrenched was the culture of war that it pitted brother against brother in battles of succession.

One obvious reason for the different tone and spirit of the Mughal Empire is the greater continuity of administration. For three hundred years the same dynasty ruled from Delhi, and for half of this period, from 1556 to 1707, four rulers in direct succession maintained control. This is a remarkable achievement in the dynastic history of any great country, but it is particularly astonishing when measured against the rapid overthrow, not just of rulers, but of dynasties, in the sultanate period. Undoubtedly this dynastic stability contributed to the rich and varied cultural life of the period.

The first chapter is devoted to the history of Agra. The second one makes a stylistic assessment administration of the Mughals. The third, is devoted to the study of architecture under the Mughals, Last three chapters deals with Agra Descriptive, Architecture Remains of Agra, Sources of Design, Agra, The Economic and Commercial Centre, Revenue, Mint Town, Main Trades (Domestic and Foreign), Trade Routes to and from Agra, Social Structure, Royalty and Nobility, Religion and Culture, Religion and their Style of Living, Cultural Scenario.

The greatness of the Mughal achievement in the political unification of India was matched by the splendor and beauty of the work of the architects, poets, historians, painters, and musicians who flourished in the period. The resemblances of the Mughal Empire to the Bourbon monarchy in France during the same period have often been noted, and in India, as in France, a literate and refined court gave a recognizable style and manner to a wide variety of arts.

Across the medieval millennium, social environments were being slowly but steadily transformed, providing new kinds of social experience, new settings for the socialization of each few generations. Whole new societies emerged in each period. Some ways of life died away as others came into being. Additions of new peoples and new cultural elements also accumulated inside old cultural areas to form more and more complex composites. Overall, people became more identified with villages, towns, and regions around them. Societies became more complex, differentiated, and intricately stratified.

Urbanism reached new heights under military regimes that promoted vast physical and social mobility. Armies protected trade routes and sultans built strategic roads. The army provided the surest route to upward mobility that always required extensive travel. In 1595, Abu Fazl's treatise on Akbar's reign, *Ain-i-Akbari* suggests that the military may have employed (directly and indirectly) almost a quarter of the imperial population. Many men traveled long distances to fight. It became standard practice for peasants to leave the Bhojpuri region, on the border of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, after the harvest each year, to fight as far away as the Deccan, to collect wages and booty, and then return home to plant the next crop. Short distance seasonal military migration became an integral feature of peasant subsistence in the Deccan. Dynasties expanded only because warriors migrated to its periphery, where they fought, settled, and attracted new waves of military migration. War pushed peasants away from home by disrupting farm operations, and by forcing villagers to feed armies. Life on the move became a common social experience for many people: seasonal migrants, people fleeing war and drought, army suppliers and camp followers, artisans moving to find work and peasants looking for new land, traders, nomads, shifting cultivators, hunters, herders, and transporters. Altogether, people on the move for at least part of each year may have comprised half the total population of major dynastic domains in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

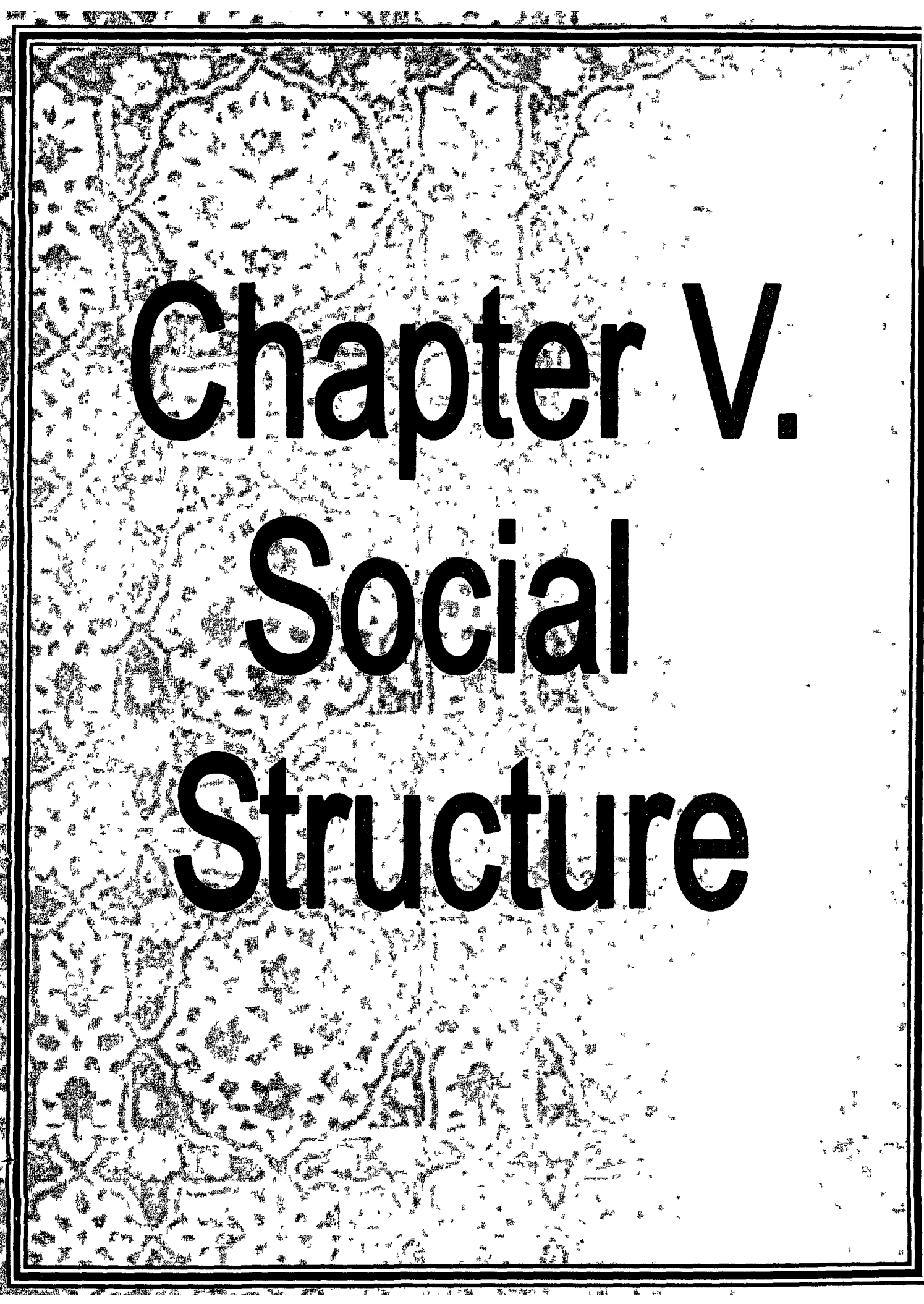
All this mobility increased commerce in various ways, as we will see. But the specific kind of urbanism that characterized late medieval domains came from concentrations of goods and services and of commercial supply and demand around fortified sites of dynastic military power. Armies at home and on the move needed diverse goods and services, from horses to weapons to cuisine, rugs, jewelry, art, and entertainment. Rulers accumulated cash and credit to pay troops and buy war materiel. Getting cash to support war required rulers to supply virtual military cities moving across the land for months at a time, filled with all sorts of army personnel, suppliers, retainers, and allied service groups. To maintain his supremacy, a sultan needed cash to finance his wide-ranging display of military power. Financial support became harder to find in times

of dynastic distress; and as a result, bankers and merchants became powerful in politics as they also became influential in urban society and culture.

The mainstream nationalist tradition of historiography presented usually gives a much broader and critical view of history. This could be seen in two early works on medieval Indian history, namely, Tara Chand's *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, and Mohammad Habib's monograph on Mahmud of Ghaznin, both published in the 1920s. Nationalist historiography presented a consistent affirmation of the compositeness of India's heritage. It also felt called upon to controvert the official British claim of improvement in Indian economic life that the colonial regime had brought about, in contrast to its 'native' predecessors. W.H. Moreland's rather cautious statement of this case brought forth challenges from Brij Narain (1929) and Radhakamal Mukerji (1934), who presented favourable views of the economic performance of the Mughal Empire.

The other effort was directed to establishing what the later medieval class structures were like, whether different from those of the earlier period or not. Satish Chandra made an initial attempt to delineate the main features of the Mughal Indian political and social order (1959). Prof. Irfan Habib presented (1963) a detailed study of the agrarian system of Mughal India, in which he argued that there were two ruling classes, the centralised nobility and the dispersed landed gentry (*zamindars*); and that the Mughal Empire collapsed because of agrarian uprisings in which the *zamindars* utilised the desperation of the oppressed peasantry. In later writing (1969), He denied that the Mughal Empire had any potentialities for capitalistic development, despite a considerable presence of commodity production. The last thesis has been contested by Iqtidar A. Khan (1975), while Prof. S. Moosvi (1987) has patiently reworked the basic statistics in the *Ain-i-Akbari* on which all work on Mughal economic history must necessarily rely. M. Athar Ali (1966), emphasising the centralised nature of Mughal polity, and the ethnic and religious compositeness of the nobility, has argued against his thesis of an agrarian crisis in that Empire.

That different views on medieval India should be influenced by the individual historian's subjective views of the contemporary world is only to be expected; these must, however, first meet the criterion of support from historical evidence. In fact, so long as new views appear and provoke a fresh or extended exploration of the historical documentation, one can only welcome the tendency not to take the given history on trust. But historical evidence must always remain the touchstone. A major problem today is that only a small and declining number of people in India have access to Persian, in which language so much of the source material of medieval India is to be found. Not only does this large body of material need to be studied, but the collection of documents in all languages has also to be encouraged, as well as local antiquarian and archaeological work. With every passing day the evidence on paper, metal or brick or stone is being destroyed. If the hand of destruction is to be stayed, the people's interest in the country's past needs to be aroused. In this effort all those who, without necessarily being professional historians themselves, have yet a care for all aspects and phases of our heritage, can play a most crucial part.



Chapter V.

Social

Structure

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

ROYALTY AND NOBILITY

In the Siyasat. Nama, Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi stressed that since the kings were divinely appointed, "they must always keep the subjects in such a position that they know their stations and never remove the ring of servitude from their ears." Alberuni, Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, Amir Khusrau, Ziauddin Barani and Shams Siraj Afif repeat the same idea.¹ As Fakhr-i-Mudabbir puts it, "if there were no kings, men would devour one another."² Even the liberal Allama Abu 'l Fazl could not think beyond this: "If royalty did not exist, the storm of strife would never subside, nor selfish ambitions disappear. Mankind (is) under the burden of lawlessness and lust. . . "⁴ The king was divinely ordained. Abu 'l Fazl says that "No dignity is higher in the eyes of God than royalty. . . Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe."⁵

Kingship thus became the most general and permanent of institutions of medieval world. The idea of despotism, of concentration of power, penetrated medieval mind with facility. Obedience to the ruler was advocated as a religious duty. The ruler was to live and also enable people to live according to the Qur'anic laws.⁶ In public life, the Muslim monarch was enjoined to discharge a host of civil, military and religious duties. The Sultan was enjoined to do justice, to levy taxes according to the Islamic law, and to appoint honest and efficient officers "so that the laws of the Shariat might be enforced through them."⁷ At times, he was to enact Zawabits (regulations) to suit particular situations, but while doing so, he could not transgress the Shariat nor "alter the

Qur'anic law!"⁸ His military duties were to defend Muslim territories, and to keep his army well equipped for conquest and extension of the territories of Islam.⁹ The religious duty of a Muslim monarch consisted in helping the indigent and those learned in the Islamic law. He was to prohibit what was not permitted by the Shara.¹⁰

The Mughal theory of kingship as it emerged under Akbar, while rooted in the basic pattern laid down by Balban, has important features of its own. In the Mughal system the king remained all-powerful, but he was not an autocrat of Balban's type. The most authoritative exposition of the Mughal theory of ruler ship is that provided by Abu'l Fazl, Akbar's closest companion, in his introduction to Ain-i-Akbari.¹¹

Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe, the argument of the book of perfection, and the receptacle of all virtues. Modern language calls it farr-i-izidi (the divine light), and the tongue of antiquity called it kiyan-i-khura (the sublime halo). It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of anyone, and men, in the presence of it, bend the forehead of praise toward the ground of submission.¹²

He lists these further requisite elements of Mughal kingship:

A paternal love toward the subjects: Thousands find rest in the love of the king and sectarian differences do not raise the dust of strife. In his wisdom, the king will understand the spirit of the age and shape his plans accordingly.¹³

A large heart: The sight of anything disagreeable does not unsettle him nor is want of discrimination for him a source of disappointment. His courage steps in. His divine firmness gives him the power of requital, nor does the high position of an offender interfere with it. ...¹⁴

A daily increasing trust in God: There is much that is rhetorical in the analysis of the court historian, but the course of the Mughal history and pronouncements

of various rulers show that during Mughal rule an attempt was made to approximate to this ideal, with the concept of paternal government constantly emphasized by Akbar and his successors.¹⁵



This concept of kingship was similar to the old indigenous notion of the ruler being the Mother and Father of the people, and it is not impossible that Akbar and Abu'l Fazl were influenced by Indian political ideas. Akbar's views were also supported and strengthened by references in Muslim philosophical and mystical writings to the ruler as "the shadow of God," and Abu'l Fazl makes repeated use of these sources. But whatever the origin of their inspiration, by softening the autocracy of the absolute monarch, Akbar and Abu'l Fazl transformed its very nature. The Mughal badshah (emperor) was not an autocratic sultan, or even a traditional Commander of the Faithful; in theory at least he was a father of his people and a trustee of their welfare. The ideal was obviously not always achieved, and Aurangzeb's reign was marked by far-reaching deviations, but by and large the Mother and Father concept was accepted by the rulers and the ruled.¹⁶

The king remained supreme whether among the Turks or the Mughals, and the assignments of conquered lands were granted by him to lords, soldiers or commoners or his own relatives as salary or reward in consideration of distinguished military service in the form of iqtas or jagirs,¹⁷ sometimes even on a hereditary basis, but they were not wrested from him. This system was bureaucratic. There was also a parallel feudalistic organisation but the possessor of land remained subservient to the king. It was based on personal relationship. The vassals were given jagirs and assignments primarily because of blood and kinship. On the other hand, the practice of permitting vanquished princes to retain their kingdoms as vassals, or making allotment of territories to brothers and relatives of the king, or giving assignments to particular families of nobles, learned men and theologians as reward or pension were feudalistic in nature. Some feudatories would

raise their own army, collect taxes and customary dues, pay tributes, and rally round the standard of their overlord or king with their military contingents when called upon to do so. But the assignee had no right of coining money. (In fact, coining of money was considered as a signal of rebellion.) He maintained his own troops but he had no right of waging private war.¹⁸ He could only increase his influence by entering into matrimonial alliances with powerful neighbours or the royal family. In the Sultanate and the Mughal Empire the feudal system was more bureaucratic than feudalistic; in fact it was bureaucratic throughout.¹⁹ Here the feudal nobility was a military aristocracy which incidentally owned land, rather than a landed aristocracy which occasionally had to defend Royal lands and property by military means but at other times lived quietly.²⁰



Within the first three decades of Akbar's reign, the imperial elite had grown enormously. As the Central Asian nobles had generally been nurtured on the Turko-Mongol tradition of sharing power with the royalty—an arrangement incompatible with Akbar's ambition of structuring the Mughal centralism around himself—the emperor's principal goal was to reduce their strength and influence. The emperor encouraged new elements to join his service, and Iranians came to form an important block of the Mughal nobility. Akbar also looked for new men of Indian background. Indian Afghans, being the principal opponents of the Mughals, were obviously to be kept at a distance; but the Sayyids of Baraha, the

Bukhari Sayyids, and the Kambus among the Indian Muslims were specially favoured for high military and civil positions.²¹ More significant was the recruitment of Hindu Rajput leaders into the Mughal nobility. This was a major step, even if not completely new in Indo-Islamic history, leading to a standard pattern of relationship between the Mughal autocracy and local despotism. Each Rajput chief, along with his sons and close relatives, received high rank, pay, perquisites, and an assurance that they could retain their age-old customs, rituals, and beliefs as Hindu warriors. In return, the Rajputs not only publicly expressed their allegiance but also offered active military service to the Mughals and, if called upon to do so, willingly gave daughters in marriage to the emperor or his sons. The Rajput chiefs retained control over their ancestral holdings and additionally, in return for their services, received watans (land assignments outside their homelands) in the empire. The Mughal emperor, however, asserted his right as a “paramount.” He treated the Rajput chiefs as zamindars (landholders), not as rulers. Like all local zamindars, they paid tribute, submitted to the Mughals, and received a patent of office. Akbar thus obtained wide base for Mughal power among hundreds and thousands of Rajput warriors who controlled large and small parcels of the countryside throughout much of his empire.²²



In the Mughal Era, the Zamindari system was begun to ensure proper collection of taxes during a period when the power and influence of the Mughal emperors was in decline. With the Mughal conquest of Bengal, "Zamindar" became a generic title embracing people with different kinds of landholdings and rights that ranged from the autonomous or semi-independent chieftains to the peasant-proprietors. All categories of zamindars under the Mughals were required to perform certain police, judicial and military duties. Zamindars under the Mughals were, in fact, more the public functionaries than revenue collecting agents. Although zamindaris were allowed to be held hereditarily, the holders were not considered to be the proprietors of their estates.²³

A zamindar's domain could be just a few villages or a hundred or more. The empire in northern India was divided into territorial units (parganas), each containing from 20 to 100 villages together with associated market centres and small towns. A leading zamindar was in charge of revenue collection in each pargana and an accountant was also appointed. There were similar appointments of headman and accountant for each village. Their lands were tax-free and they received about 2% each of what was a basic coin was the copper dam, with forty dams the equivalent of silver collected. Very importantly the land revenue was demanded in cash.²⁴

The territorial zamindars had judicial powers. Naturally, judge-magistracy, as an element of state authority conferred status with attendant power, which really made them the lords of their domains. They held regular courts, called Zamindari adalat. The courts fetched them not only power and status but some income as well by way of fines, presents and perquisites. The petty zamindars also had some share in the dispensation of civil and criminal justice. The Chowdhurys, who were zamindars in most cases, had authority to deal with the complaints of debts, thefts and petty quarrels and to impose paltry fines.²⁵

Agra; and its aggressive Zamindars were left in restrained peace. Consequently this region remained largely Hindu. Here the small minority of Muslims was introduced as a result of early Turkish victories and Muslim immigrants were added largely under the Saiyyads and Lodis. Rajputana was Hindu; Muslims there were in

insignificant numbers. The Ain-i-Akbari provides us with names of prominent dominant castes of the time in the various parganas of the Mughal Empire.²⁶ In the middle of the doab (Agra, Muthra, Aligarh upto Kanpur) about 69 per cent of Zamindaris were held by one or other Rajput clan. If we add the share of the Brrahmans and Saiyids the percentage increases to about 75%.²⁷ The upper caste superior Zamindars should have engaged a large number of cultivators on their fields and controlled larger area, including cultivatable and uncultivable waste, in comparison to traditional cultivating caste, felicitously called *Primary zamindars*. Mughal emperors conferred such zamindari rights on people who cleared the forests or brought waste lands under cultivation.²⁸

Autonomous Zamindars were the hereditary landowners who enjoyed sovereign powers. Rajput rulers, Jats (large peasant landowners) belonged to the category of Chieftains. The Mughals not only continued demanding recognition of overlord ship, payment of tribute and rendering of military assistance, from the chieftains but they also absorbed them in imperial hierarchy and the administrative machinery. The revenue from their jagir would far exceed that of chiftain's hereditary dominion. Apart from bringing monetary advantages, imperial services were the source of power to the chieftains and enabled them to strengthen their position by recruiting and maintaining large armies.²⁹

The Mughal asserted the principle of *paramountcy*, which ment that chieftain depended for his position of good will of emperor rather than on his heritance right. The title of 'raja' was allotted by the emperor. Jahangir rejected the nomination of a younger son of Rai Singh of Bikaner and nominated the elder one instead. Akbar the younger son of raja Man Singh of Amber, Bhao Singh was made the Raja in place of his elder brother.³⁰

The Mughals were successful in utilizing systematically the military service of even those chieftains who even did not held mansabs. The troops supplied by the chieftains contributed appreciably to the military might of the Mughal Empire. The Mughals established direct relations with the vessals of these chieftains, thus checking their power and created new allies.³¹

Intermediary Zamindars were the Zamindars who collected the land revenue and paid to the imperial treasury or the jagirdars or to the chieftains, or in certain cases kept it to them selves. They were responsible in maintaining law and order. In return to their services they enjoyed various types of perquisites, such as commissions, deductions, revenue free land (nankar or banth), cesses, etc usually their share of the revenue ranged between 2.5 and 10 % most of the zamindars possessed hereditary rights, though in a few cases they held their positions on short-term contracts. Among the intermediaries may be the *chaudhries*, *desmukhs*, *desais*, *despandes*, certain types of *mugaddams*, *kanungos* and *ijaradars*, and the class of zamindars who contracted with the state to realise the revenue of a given territory and who began to be known during the second half of seventeenth century by the generic designation of *talukdars*.³²

Most of the intermediaries were suppose to prepare the details of revenue assessment for the perusal of the state, help in realization of the land revenue, encourage extension of cultivation, assist the imperial officers in the maintenance of law and order, and supply a fixed number of contingents.³³

It was a known practice with the rulers of India to provide the means of substance, or to the state exchequer, to certain categories of people. The Mughal Continue at the practice.³⁴ How ever the credit should go to the Mughals who made such grants so liberally that the grantee soon emerged as a distant category of land holders.³⁵ The beneficiaries include the men of knowledge and learning, person's deeply involved in religious pursuits incapable of earning a livelihood, and persons of noble lineage who would not take to any employment.³⁶ Such grants were made in the form of both cash and land, being known as *wazifa* and *madad-i-ma'ash* respectively. He term *suyurghul* applied to grants of both kinds. By far the largest these numbers of beneficiaries of state bounty the received tax free land grants which were located in almost all the parganas. According to A'in the suba Agra stood third in the degree of revenue diversion to *madad-i-ma'ash*. But among zabti provinces, suba of Agra shows a high concentration of grant holders(24.53%).³⁷

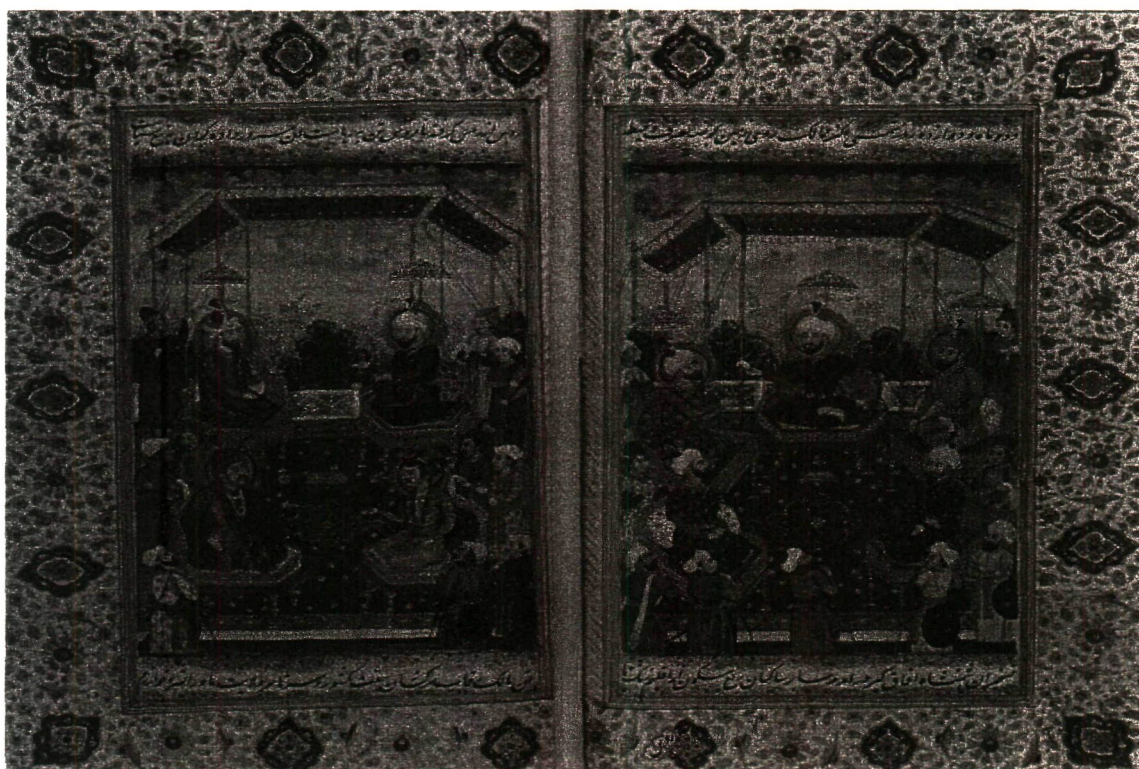
The bureaucracy that the *Ain-i-Akbari* records rested on personal loyalty to the emperor among nobles who held all the places in the empire together. The nobility was the backbone of imperial society, commanding armies financed with taxes from imperial territories. The emperor had the biggest army under his private command, but he could not defeat a substantial alliance of great nobles. Warriors with independent means initially became nobles (*amirs*) by being assigned a rank or dignity (*mansab*) with assignments of salary or income from lands. In 1590, Akbar revised the system to remunerate nobles in proportion to the number of men and horses under their command. This linked imperial rank explicitly to noble military assets. The plan was to create an elite corps of military commanders who maintained the dignity of their aristocratic warrior status through service and loyalty to the emperor.³⁸

The Mughal nobility came to comprise mainly the Central Asians (Turans), Iranians (Iranis), Afghans, Indian Muslims of diverse subgroups, and Rajputs. Both historical circumstances and a planned imperial policy contributed to the integration of this complex and heterogeneous ruling class into a single imperial service. The emperor saw to it that no single ethnic or religious group was large enough to challenge his supreme authority.³⁹

		Total number of Nobles	No of khanazadas	Khanazadas as percentage of total no. of nobles
Ain's list	5000 to 200	411	148	36
	1000 and above	133	40	30
At the death of Akbar	1000 and above	84	37	44
Jahangir's reign	1000 and above	81	39	48
At the end of 15 th year of Jahangir.	1000 and above	156	65	41

While Akbar's own great abilities go far in explaining his success as a ruler, he was fortunate in the very high quality of the men who surrounded him. Among these were such notable administrators as Amir Fathullah Shirazi, Man Singh, Todar Mal, Khwaja Mansur, and scholars like Nizam-ud-din Bakhshi and the historian Badauni. The persons who most vividly represent the calibre of his servants, however, were Abu'l Fazl (1551–1602) and his elder brother, Faizi (1545–1595). They were members of a distinguished family of scholars, and were held in high esteem by Akbar because of their intellectual gifts, their loyalty to him, and the similarity of their views on religion. Abu'l Fazl was the court chronicler, the drafter of the emperor's correspondence, and his personal confidant. The animosity of the other courtiers because of his favoured position was given a religious colouring when he became the spokesman for Akbar's unorthodox religious policy, and in his last years they succeeded in keeping him away from the capital.⁴⁰

Both brothers were writers of distinction, but Abu'l Fazl clothed his ideas in an ornate and verbose style. It is Faizi's writings that give us more indication of the intensity of the conflict which tore the hearts and minds of the intellectuals of the age. He was introduced at the court in September, 1567, when he was a young man of twenty. He gave expression to his feelings in the first Qasida which he wrote in praise of Akbar⁴¹



How shall I write of the time when the barge of my heart
Was tossing on the billows of the tempest?
A quickening spring visited my word-garden,
A youthful morning came to my spirit's tulip,
While I was disturbed, thinking by what argument
I could remove doubts about absolute verities.
Why is this diversity practiced in Islam?
Wherefore ambiguities in the words of the Quran?
Why did false witness shoot out the tongue in the tribunal
Of pride and hypocrisy, and claim belief?
If such be the religion of Islam in this world,
Scoffers can have a thousand smiles at the Musulman faith.
His inner conflicts form a recurrent theme in Faizi's poetry. In a later quatrain he says:
O God! What can I do, except lament on your path.
One particle did not receive illumination, what can I do?
I long to move towards the heights
But You Yourself have given me a feeble might, what can I do!
And again, O God, through Your grace, grant me hope untainted by fear.
Teach me that knowledge, in which lies your pleasure.
The darkness of intellect keeps me in conflict;
*Give me the light of resignation from the lamp of raza [resignation].*⁴²

Akbar's successors made a major departure of from the principle of periodic transfer of jagirdars. Based primarily on Barnier's observation, it has generally been held that jagirdars were not aloud to stay in the one place for very long period, as they were transferred on an average, every three years. In several cases Mughal nobles with high mansabs remain undisturbed in their place of assignment for exceptionally long period. In short stays in the place did not allow a jagirdars sufficient time to work for the development of agriculture and instead made him insensitive to the plight of the producers, there is no single scheme relating to development of agriculture that could be associated with the jagirdars noticed above. Instead, what we see is that the tendency to remain long in the region as a jagirdar had already taken to root in the seventeenth century. The possibility cannot be ruled out that such period were found adequate by the jagirdars and zamindars to develop a nexus and, thus, deprive the state of increase of revenue generation on various accounts.⁴³

A significant change took place in the composition of the nobility and the holders of high office during the years of Nur Jahan's ascendancy. Akbar had made good use of the indigenous element—such men as Abu'l Fazl, Faizi, Todar Mal, Shaikh Farid, Man Singh, and Bhagwan Singh come to mind—and had maintained a due balance between the Irani and Turani elements. Under Jahangir this balance was upset, and the Iranis became all-powerful. This was facilitated by the early death of Shaikh Farid and by the stigma attached to Man Singh, the Rajput leader, and to Khan-i-Azam, the premier Turani noble, because of their association with Khusrau. Held in check, the Irani element was a source of strength, but this ceased to be the case in the eighteenth century, when its political role during the decline of the empire weakened the realm.⁴⁴

Even more objectionable was the mushroom growth of bureaucracy and the resultant increase in government expenditure. No large territory was added to the empire, but the number of mansabdars, which under Akbar numbered about eight hundred, was increased to nearly three thousand in Jahangir's reign. The author of *Maasir-ul-Umara*, himself a financial expert, in dealing with the fiscal history of the Mughal period, said: "In the time of Jahangir, who was a careless prince and paid no

attention to political or financial matters, and who was constitutionally thoughtless and pompous, the fraudulent officials, in gathering lucre, and hunting for bribes, paid no attention to the abilities of men or to their performance. The devastation of the country and the diminution of income rose to such a height that the revenue of the exchequer-lands fell to five million rupees while expenditure rose to fifteen million, and large sums were expended out of the general treasury." ⁴⁵

Jahangir must bear the ultimate responsibility for this state of affairs, but the immediate cause was the dominance and policy of Nur Jahan. She was a woman of noble impulses and good taste who spent large sums in charity, particularly for the relief of indigent women, and worked hard to relieve the drabness of Indian life. Many innovations which enhanced the grace and charm of Mughal culture can be directly traced to her, and her influence led to the maintenance of a magnificent court. But all this strained the royal resources. ⁴⁶

The lavish style of living introduced at the royal court was initiated by the nobility, and an era of extravagance, with its concomitants of corruption and demoralization among officers of the state, was inaugurated. This corroded the structure of the Mughal government. A contemporary Dutch account sharply criticized Nur Jahan and her "crowd of Khurasanis" for what it was costing the state to maintain "their excessive pomp," and complained that the foreign bureaucrats were particularly indifferent to the condition of the masses.⁴⁷ To Nur Jahan herself belongs the doubtful honor of introducing the system of nazars or gifts to the court—corruption at the royal level. Asaf Khan emerges in the pages of Sir Thomas Roe's account of his negotiations at the Mughal court as exceedingly greedy for such gifts. ⁴⁸

Mughal nobility was unique in two ways: a) Mughal empire was the only Muslim state where the shia and the sunni nobles co-existed peacefully. B) Empire provided opportunities for service irrespective of ethnic, religious or familial ties and thus created a "new individual and group identity". For instance, the successful expansion of the empire brought chances of promotion according to the performance of the individual

noble.⁴⁹ The consolidation of the empire depended on its capacity, firstly, to politically integrate the most important social groups and secondly, to secure the financial resources that were necessary for its survival.⁵⁰

In order to achieve a certain unity within the nobility and to gain the nobles undiminished dedication to the concerns of the imperial centre, the Mughal empire had to provide opportunities to satisfy the interests of the imperial elites and in this way build the nobles identification with the imperial idea.⁵¹

Mughal nobles once appointed were practically never dismissed from the service, unless they committed the grievous offence or rebelled. Even rebels were pardoned and restored to the previous position.⁵²

The Mughal nobility became and remained a heterogeneous body of free men, not slaves (like the Turkish nobility), who rose to eminence as their talents and the emperor's favours permitted. But no single ethnic or sectarian group was ever large enough to challenge the authority of the emperor. Rewards and incentives rather than force and coercion were the Mughal's preferred approach. The system offered generous money rewards as well as lavish honours and preferment to those who performed well at all levels.⁵³

Possessing great wealth and power, these nobles or *umara* were highly visible public figures. Their personalities, habits, and movements were the topic of endless rumours and speculations. The greatest nobles used to be the objects of empire wide- attention. News of royal favour or disfavour, of illnesses, marriages, postings, and other information formed the stuff of countless reports that flashed across the empire. Wherever, they were posted, whether in court or in the provinces, the patrimonial households of the nobles were a focal point of aristocratic life and culture. To the extent his resources permitted each nobleman emulated the style, etiquette, and opulence of the emperor.⁵⁴

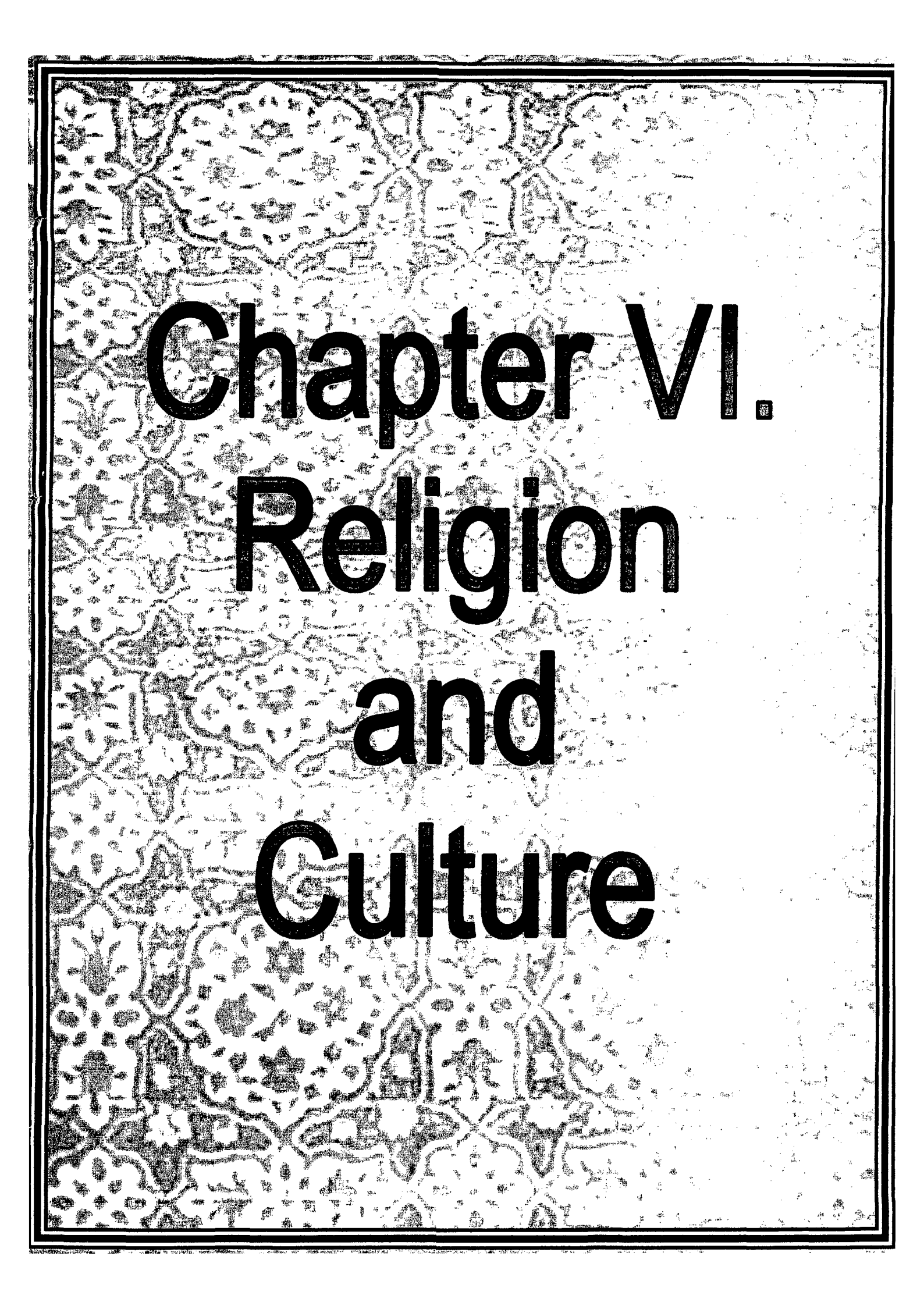
These nobles patronized artists, and craftsmen who produced the products exclusively from them. In the Mughal cities of Agra, Delhi, Burhanpur and Lahore, the morphology of urban life was determined by the settlement patterns of the Mughal nobility. Architects, artisans, builders, poets, found permanent employment in the noble entourages. Mughal officials and frequently, their women spent large sums of money for the construction of public buildings i.e. mosques, inns, stone bridges, gardens and markets. The origin of dozen of new towns and villages through out the Mughal India can be traced to the investment by these nobles.

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Chapter VI.

Religion

and

Culture

Religion and culture

The Mughal Empire ruled most of India in the 16th and 17th centuries. It consolidated Islam in South Asia, and spread Muslim (and particularly Persian) arts and culture as well as the faith. The Mughals were Muslims who ruled a country with a large Hindu majority. However for much of their empire they allowed Hindus to reach senior government or military positions. The Mughals brought many changes to India:

- Centralised government which brought together many smaller kingdoms
- Delegated government with respect for human rights
- Persian art and culture
- Persian language mixed with Arabic and Hindi to create Urdu
- Periods of great religious tolerance
- A style of architecture (e.g. the Taj Mahal)
- A system of education that took account of pupils' needs and culture

Muslims in India

There had been Muslims in India long before the Mughals. The first Muslims arrived in the 8th century. In the first half of the 10th century a Muslim ruler of Afghanistan invaded the Punjab 11 times, without much political success, but taking away a great deal of loot. A more successful invasion came at the end of the 12th century. This eventually led to the formation of the Delhi Sultanate. A later Muslim invasion in 1398 devastated the city of Delhi. The Mughal Empire grew out of descendants of the Mongol Empire who were living in Mongolia in the 15th century. They had become Muslims and assimilated the culture of the Middle East, while keeping elements of their Far Eastern roots. They also retained the great military skill and cunning of their Mongol ancestors, and were among the first Western military leaders to have guns.¹

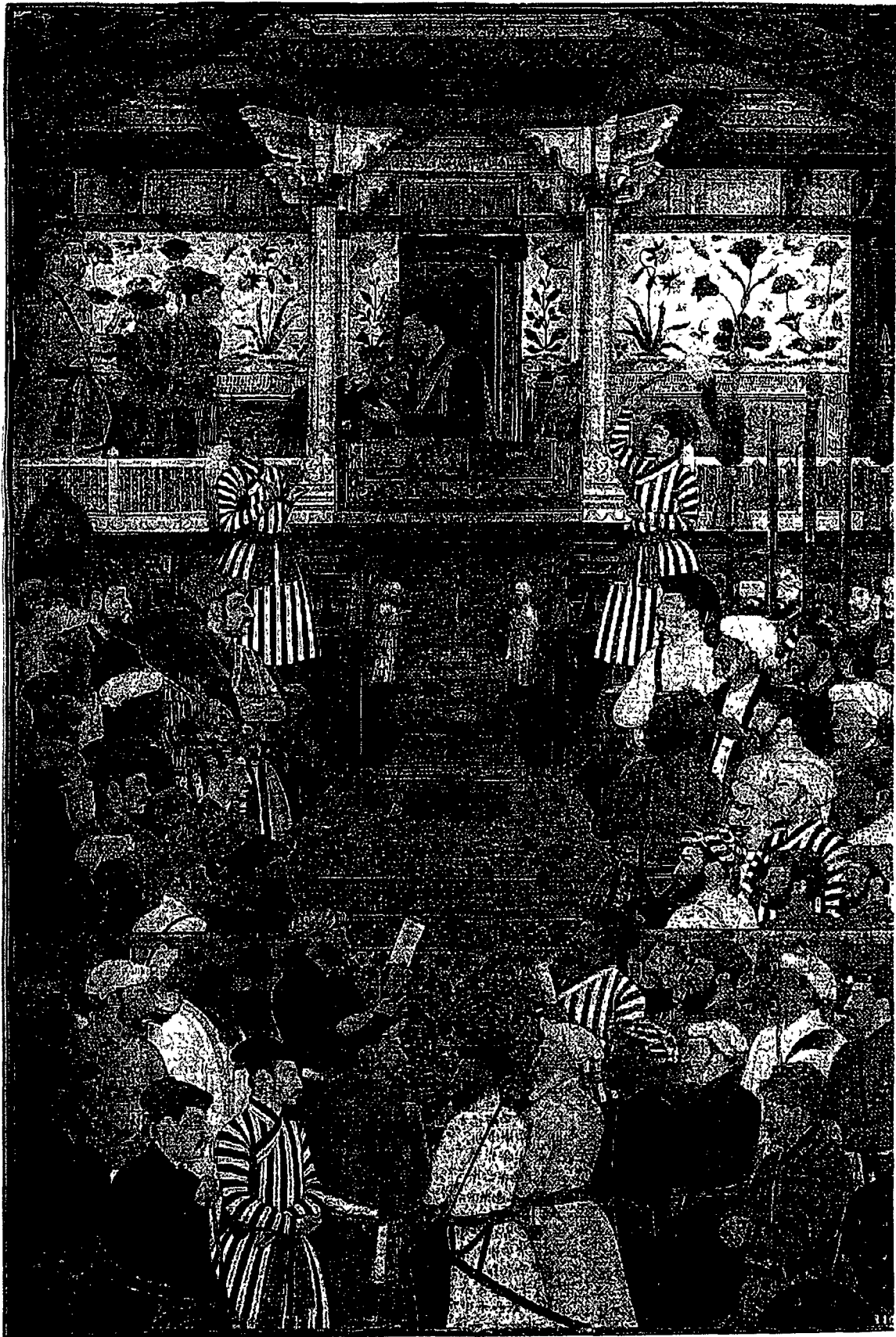
One obvious reason for the different tone and spirit of the Mughal Empire is the greater continuity of administration. For three hundred years the same dynasty ruled from

India, and for half of this period, from 1556 to 1707, four rulers in direct succession maintained control. This is a remarkable achievement in the dynastic history of any great country, but it is particularly astonishing when measured against the rapid overthrow, not just of rulers, but of dynasties, in the sultanate period. Undoubtedly this dynastic stability contributed to the rich and varied cultural life of the period. The basic reason for the different tone of the two periods is, however, the success of Akbar, in creating an enduring system of administration.²

The beginnings of Mughal rule followed a familiar pattern: an adventurous chieftain in the mountainous areas to the northwest, attracted by possibilities of wealth and power during a period of internal weakness in India, gathered his forces for a sudden descent upon the Punjab.³ Babur was ruler of a kingdom centred on Kabul when he invaded India in 1526, it is worth remembering that the Mughal dynasty was Turkish in origin, and the cultural tradition which Babur imported into India was the one which had flourished on the banks of the Oxus. Timur attracted a large number of poets, musicians, and philosophers to his brilliant court, and built and embellished his capital, Samarqand, in a truly magnificent style. After Timur's death in 1405 these cultural traditions were more than maintained by his descendants, who made their capitals centres of art and learning that drew upon the whole Islamic world. This was the atmosphere in which Babur grew up, and which he and his successor were to transplant to Lahore, Delhi, and Agra. Babur himself was a writer of great distinction, and his autobiography is considered one of the great monuments of Turkish prose.⁴

The Empire Babur founded was a sophisticated civilisation based on religious toleration. It was a mixture of Persian, Mongol and Indian culture.

Under Babur Hinduism was tolerated and new Hindu temples were built with his permission. Trade with the rest of the Islamic world, especially Persia and through Persia to Europe, was encouraged. The importance of slavery in the Empire diminished and peace was made with the Hindu kingdoms of Southern India.⁵



Babur brought a broadminded, confident Islam from central Asia. His first act after conquering Delhi was to forbid the killing of cows because that was offensive to Hindus. He may have been descended from brutal conquerors, but he was not a barbarian bent on loot and plunder. Instead he had great ideas about civilisation, architecture and administration. He even wrote an autobiography, *The Babur - Namah*. The autobiography is candid, honest and at times even poetic.⁶

Humayun who was a bad Emperor, a better poet, and a drug addict. Humayun was twenty-three when he succeeded his father, and while he had experience as a military commander, he lacked his father's vigour and toughness. While Humayun's career as an Indian ruler was brief and insecure, his contribution to the cultural synthesis of the Mughal period was of very considerable importance, for from his reign dates the increasing Persian influence on Islamic civilization in India. During years of exile at the court of Shah Tahmasp of Persia, he had come in contact with the artists who were making Tabriz a great cultural centre. Two of them, Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwajah Abdus Samad, apparently were given offers of employment by Humayun, and in 1550 both of them joined him at Kabul, which he had occupied prior to his reconquest of India.⁷ Humayun entrusted the two artists with various commissions including the preparation and illustration of the famous Persian classic, *Dastan-i-Amir Hamzah*, portions of which have survived. They accompanied Humayun to Agra, and were retained later by Akbar as his court painters. By training local talent and attracting other artists from abroad, a school of painting was established which was to be one of the glories of the Mughal empire.⁸

To the Perso-Turkish culture Akbar added other elements such as Indo-Muslim music, Hindu philosophy, and Hindi literature, which had received little official support at Delhi during the sultanate, although they had flourished in the regional kingdoms. With this broadened basis, Mughal culture assumed a pattern which has left a permanent mark on the cultural life of the subcontinent.⁹

The policy adopted toward his Hindu subjects, was his marriages to Rajput princesses (one of the landmarks in the development of his religious policy) took place early in 1562.¹⁰ The relatives of the Rajput wives, like Raja Bhagwan Das and Raja Man Singh,

were appointed to high posts and became partners of the Mughals in the administration of the country. Then in 1564 Akbar abolished the pilgrim tax, earning the gratitude of the large number of Hindus who flocked to various places of pilgrimage. The following year he took a more important step—the abolition of the *jizya*. These measures enabled Akbar to gain the active collaboration of the fighting classes of Hindu India and the goodwill of the Hindu population.¹¹

Akbar was the real builder of the Mughal empire, and he laid down the principles and policies which, but for occasional modifications and minor adjustments, remained the basis of the Mughal administrative system. Foremost among these was his treatment of the Hindu population. For understanding the significance of his policy of toleration, it is important, however, to see his actions against the background of previous movements in the same direction, and not as a complete innovation. Hindus had long been employed in positions of responsibility—even Mahmud of Ghazni, the great "destroyer of idols," had a contingent of Indian troops under Indian officers—and no Muslim ruler had succeeded in dispensing with the services of Hindu officials on the level of local administration. There were, however, great difficulties to be overcome before general participation was possible. From the side of the early Turkish rulers, there had been prejudice not only against Hindus, but even against Indian converts to Islam. Under the Khaljis a change took place, and henceforth converts found employment in high office. This change led to a more general employment of Hindus, and during Sher Shah's reign (1538–1545) a number of Hindus held important military posts. But this exclusion of Hindus had not been entirely the result of Islamic attitudes: many Hindus had strong objection to service under a Muslim ruler. Furthermore, until Hindus were willing to learn Persian, the court language, their widespread employment in government was not possible. By the fifteenth century, when it was apparent that the Muslim rule was permanent, many Brahmins had begun to learn Persian, and their movement into government service began.¹²

In Akbar's time there was a general emphasis on reason, intellect, and philosophy, and works connected with these subjects were encouraged. Furthermore, there were a number of other scholars besides Fathullah who had migrated from Persia. Among these was Hakim Abul Fath Gilana, Akbar's court physician, who wrote a commentary on

Avicenna. Scholars from Samarqand and Bukhara also encouraged the study of logic. The efforts of these scholars and Akbar's own preferences combined to give an impetus to the spread of education which placed learning on a new footing in Islamic India. Maqulat, or mental sciences, became so important in the Mughal Empire that a century later, when the educational curriculum was standardized, these traditional studies, and not the Islamic subjects such as tafsir and hadith, occupied the place of honour in the syllabus. These new disciplines were formal in nature, but their study in the Mughal period stimulated intellectual interest, facilitated mental discipline of the pupils, and provided the intellectual basis for the splendid Mughal cultural life.¹³

The Political Theory of Akbar's State

There was considerable disagreement all during the reigns of Babur, Humayun, and Akbar over the nature of monarchy and its place in Islamic society. Many Islamic scholars under Babur and Akbar believed that the Indian monarchies were fundamentally un-Islamic. At the heart of the problem was the fact that none of the invading monarchs were approved by the Caliph, but rather were acting solely on their own. The majority of Islamic scholars, however, concluded that the monarch was divinely appointed by God to serve humanity and that the Indian sultanate or the Mughal *padshah* was acting in the place of the Caliph.¹⁴

The political theorists and Islamic scholars surrounding Akbar were deeply influenced by Shi'a Islam. In particular, they subscribed to the Shi'a notion that God had created a Divine Light that is passed down in an individual from generation to generation; this individual is known as the Imam. The central theorist of Akbar's reign was Abu'l Fazl, who joined Akbar's court in 1574 and is considered one of the greatest political theorists in Islamic history. He believed that the Imamate existed in the world in the form of just rulers. The Imam, in the form of a just ruler, had secret knowledge of God, was free from sin, and was primarily responsible for the spiritual guidance of humanity. This, to a certain extent, made the *padshah* superior to the *Shari'a*, or Islamic law, and the Islamic scholars that interpreted it. Needless to say, orthodox Islamic scholars bitterly opposed this political

theory, but instead advocated a close partnership between the *ulama* , or Islamic religious and legal scholars, and the Sultan or *padshah* .¹⁵

Abu'l Fazl was also deeply influenced by Platonic philosophy as it had been handed down by Muslim philosophers. In particular, he argued for Plato's concept of the "philosopher-king," who, by virtue of his talent, wisdom, and learning, deserved to be obeyed by all others. He saw Akbar as the embodiment of the perfect philosopher-king.¹⁶

From a religious standpoint, Akbar's state was built on the principle *sulahkul* , or "universal tolerance." All religions were to be equally tolerated in the administration of the state; hence the repeal of the *jizya* and the pilgrimage taxes. In Akbar's theory of government, the ruler's duty is to ensure justice (*'adale*) for all the people in his care no matter what their religion. That two of his most famous officials, Man Singh, viceroy of Kabul and Bengal, and Todar Mal, his revenue minister, were Hindus, was an indication not of his desire to show his tolerance but his freedom to choose able associates wherever they might be found. Beyond these administrative acts, Akbar showed his sympathies with Hindu culture by patronizing the classical Indian arts, providing scope once more for painters, musicians, and dancers of the old tradition. Perhaps the most striking of his activities in this area is the creation of the post of kavi rai, or poet laureate, for Hindi poets. The adaptation of Hindu elements in architecture is demonstrated in many of Akbar's buildings, notably at Fathpur Sikri. There and elsewhere he showed regard to Hindu religious leaders.¹⁷

Din-i Ilahi

Akbar took very seriously Abu'l Fazl's idea that he was a spiritual leader of his people and he devoted considerable amounts of time and resources to sorting out the common truth in the multiple religions he ruled over. From this concern he developed a new religion he called *Din-i Ilahi*, or "The Religion of God." Believing, as Muslims do, that every faith contained the essential truth that God is unified and one thing, he sought to find the unifying aspects of all religions. He originally began this project, long before he came up with *Din-i Ilahi*, by sponsoring a series of debates at his court between representatives of the various religions, which included Christianity (Catholic Jesuits), Hindus, Zoroastrians, and

Jains. Eventually he included members of the *ulama*, but the debates did not go well because of the intolerant attitude and behaviours of the Jesuit participants who wanted to convert Akbar, not discuss the formation of a universal religion.

Akbar was a devout and, so he said, an orthodox Muslim; still, aspects of his belief were in part derived from Shi'a Islam. The *Din-i Ilahi*, the religion that would synthesize the world's religions into a single religion, that he established was predominantly based on Islam. Like Islam, it was rationalistic and was based on one overriding doctrine, the doctrine of *tawhid* : God is one thing and is singular and unified. Akbar also elevated the notion of *wahdat-al wujud*, or "unity of the real," to a central religious idea in his new religion. The world, as a creation of God, is a single and unified place that reflects the singularity and unity of its creator. Finally, Akbar fully subscribed to the Islamic idea of the Perfect Man represented by the life of the Prophet or by the Shi'ite Imamate. There is little questioning that Akbar accepted Abu'l Fazl's notion that he was the Divine Light and was a Perfect Man. He assumed the title, "Revealers of the Internal and Depicter of the Real," which defined his role as a disseminator of secret knowledge of God and his function of fashioning the world in the light of this knowledge.¹⁸

In addition to Islam, however, the *Din-i Ilahi* also contained aspects of Jainism, Zoroastrianism, and Hinduism. The *Din-i Ilahi* borrowed from Jainism a respect and care for all living things, and it derived from Zoroastrianism sun-worship and, especially, the idea of divine kingship. This latter innovation deeply disturbed the *ulama*; they regarded it as outright heresy. The notion of divine kingship, however, would last throughout the history of the Mughal Empire.¹⁹

Akbar began his rule as a devout, orthodox Muslim. He said all the five prayers in the congregation, often recited the call for prayers, and occasionally swept out the palace mosque himself. He showed great respect for the two leading religious leaders at the court, Makhdum-ul-Mulk and Shaikh Abdul Nabi. Makhdum-ul-Mulk, who had been an important figure during the reign of the Surs, became even more powerful in the early days of Akbar. Shaikh Abdul Nabi, who was appointed *sadr-ul-sadur* in 1565, was given authority which no other holder of the office (the highest religious position in the realm) had ever

enjoyed. Akbar would go to his house to hear him expound the sayings of the Prophet, and he placed his heir, Prince Salim, under his tutorship. "For some time the Emperor had so great faith in him as a religious leader that he would bring him his shoes and place them before his feet."²⁰ He always entered Ajmer on foot, and in 1568 and 1570, in fulfilment of vows, walked the entire way from Agra to Ajmer.²¹ It was probably devotion to Khwaja Muin-ud-din that was responsible for Akbar's interest in Shaikh Salim Chishti, a contemporary saint who lived at the site of what was to become Akbar's capital at Fathpur Sikri. It was there that he built the Ibadat Khana, the House of Worship, which he set apart for religious discussions. Every Friday after the congregational prayers, scholars, dervishes, theologians, and courtiers interested in religious affairs would assemble in the Ibadat Khana and discuss religious subjects in the royal presence.²²

The gatherings of the Ibadat Khana were exposed to new and influences. In addition to the Muslim scholars, Hindu pandits, Parsi mobeds and Jain sadhus began to attend the gatherings. They expressed their own points of view, and the emperor, ever open to new ideas, was attracted by some of their practices. A more serious complication arose when the emperor invited Jesuits from Goa to the discussions. They did not confine themselves to the exposition of their own beliefs, but reviled Islam and the Prophet in unrestrained language.²³

According to Abu'l Fazl, the kotwals were asked to ensure that no ox or buffalo or horse or camel was slaughtered, and the killing of all animals was prohibited on many days of the year—including the whole month of Aban—except for feeding the animals used in hunting and for the sick. Akbar interested himself in the reform of marriage customs. He abhorred marriages before the age of puberty, and also considered marriages between near relations highly improper. He disapproved of large dowries, but admitted that they acted as a preventative to rash divorces. "Nor does His Majesty approve of everyone marrying more than one wife; for this ruins the man's health, and disturbs the peace of the home." Circumcision before the age of twelve was forbidden. The kotwals were to "forbid the restriction of personal liberty and the selling of slaves," and a woman was not to be burned on her husband's funeral pyre without giving her consent. Government officers were not to consider homage paid to the sun as worshipping fire. A governor was expected to accustom

himself to night vigils and to partake of sleep and food in moderation. He was to pass the dawn and evening in meditation and pray at noon and midnight. Nauroz, the Parsi New Year, was to be celebrated officially, with the kotwal keeping a vigil on that night.²⁴

Akbar spent most of his time concerned with administration, culture, the arts, and his new religion, Din-i Ilahi, rather than pursuing wars of conquest. Jahangir seems to have inherited the attitude of the older Akbar, for he lavishly patronized the arts: painting, architecture, philosophy, and literature, while ignoring military conquest. The period of Jahangir's tenure as Emperor is considered the richest period of Mughal culture; Indian, Muslim, and Western scholars have named this period, the age of Mughal splendour.

Shah Jahan, whose reign ended on such a sad note, was perhaps the most magnificent of the Muslim rulers of India. His empire extended over an area greater than that of any of his Mughal predecessors. Largely due to the financial ability of his wise wazir, Saadullah Khan, the royal treasury was full. Because of this, Shah Jahan was able to embark on a great building program in Delhi and Agra and to encourage the other arts, particularly music and painting. Shah Jahan wanted to earn the title of *Shahanshah-i-Adil*, the Just Emperor. He took a personal interest in the administration of justice, and tried to be like a father to his subjects. During the first few years he seems to have been under the influence of religious revivalists, although later, under Sufi influences, he became more tolerant. The apathy and indifference that had characterized Jahangir's attitude disappeared, and the regime was marked by attempts to approximate the administration to orthodox Islamic law—including the creation of a department to look after new converts to Islam.²⁵

Shah Jahan's reign was marked not only by the predominance of the indigenous Muslim elements, but also by the dominating position of Rajputs in the army and Hindu officials in the imperial secretariat. Rai Raghunath officiated for some time as diwan, while Rai Chandra Bhan Brahman was in charge of the secretariat. The explanation seems to be that by now Hindus were in a position to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Mughal polity, and with the increasing influence of their patron, Dara, they made rapid headway.²⁶

Akbar had based his policy of equal treatment for all subjects on laws of natural justice; in Shah Jahan's time the Muslim scholars advocated it on the basis of Islamic law and principles. Shah Muhibullah of Allahabad wrote in a letter to Dara Shukoh that the Holy Prophet had been referred to as *Rahmat-ul-lil-Alimin*—a blessing to all the worlds and not only to Muslims. Mulla Abul Hakim, the greatest scholar of the day, gave a ruling that according to Islamic law a mosque could not be set up on the property of another, and that the conversion of a Jain temple into a mosque by Prince Aurangzeb was unauthorized.²⁷

Shah Jahan's reign represents the golden age of the Mughal Empire, but as some students have pointed out, the artistic productions of the period give an impression of over-ripeness and a certain loss of vigour. Mughal civilization had reached its climax and was moving toward its declining phase. But the resolute vigour of Aurangzeb, a man of iron will, held the structure together for another half a century and gave it new support, so that the end came very gradually.

While Aurangzeb was extending the empire in the east and south, and consolidating his position on the northwest marches, he was also concerned with the strengthening of Islam throughout the kingdom. His attempt to conduct the affairs of state according to traditional Islamic policy brought to the fore the problem that had confronted every ruler who had attempted to make Islam the guiding forces: the position of the Hindu majority in relation to the government. In 1688, when he forbade music at the royal court and took other puritanical steps in conformity with strict injunctions of Muslim law, he affected both Hindus and Muslims. When *jizya*, abolished for nearly a century, was reimposed in 1679, it was the Hindus alone who suffered.²⁸

By now Aurangzeb had accepted the policy of regulating his government in accordance with strict Islamic law, and many orders implementing this policy were issued. A large number of taxes were abolished which had been levied in India for centuries but which were not authorized by Islamic law. Possibly it was the unfavourable effect of these remissions on the state exchequer which led to the exploration of other lawful sources of revenue. The fact that, according to the most responsible account, the reimposition of *jizya* was suggested by an officer of the finance department would seem to show that it was

primarily a fiscal measure.²⁹ The theologians, who were becoming dominant at the court, naturally endorsed the proposal, and Aurangzeb carried it out with his customary thoroughness.

Another measure which has caused adverse comment is the issue of orders at various stages regarding the destruction of Hindu temples. Originally these orders applied to a few specific cases—such as the temple at Mathura built by Abu'l Fazl's murderer, to which a railing had been added by Aurangzeb's rival, Dara Shukoh. More far-reaching is the claim that when it was reported to him that Hindus were teaching Muslims their "wicked science," Aurangzeb issued orders to all governors "ordering the destruction of temples and schools and totally prohibiting the teaching and infidel practices of the unbelievers."³⁰ That such an order was actually given is doubtful; certainly it was never carried out with any thoroughness. However, it is incontestable that at a certain stage Aurangzeb tried to enforce strict Islamic law by ordering the destruction of newly built Hindu temples. Later, the procedure was adopted of closing down rather than destroying the newly built temples in Hindu localities. It is also true that very often the orders of destruction remained a dead letter, but Aurangzeb was too deeply committed to the ordering of his government according to Islamic law to omit its implementation in so significant a matter. The fact that a total ban on the construction of new temples was adopted only by later jurists, and was a departure from the earlier Muslim practice as laid down by Muhammad ibn Qasim in Sind, was no concern of the correct, conscientious, and legal-minded Aurangzeb.³¹

As a part of general policy of ordering the affairs of the state in accordance with the views of the ulama, certain discriminatory orders against the Hindus were issued: for example, imposition of higher customs duties, 5 percent on the goods of the Hindus as against 2 percent on those of Muslims. These were generally in accordance with the practice of the times, but they marked a departure not only from the political philosophy governing Mughal government, but also from the policy followed hitherto by most Muslim rulers in India.³²

Aurangzeb has often been accused of closing the doors of official employment on the Hindus, but a study of the list of his officers shows this is not so. Actually there were

more Hindu officers under him than under any other Mughal emperor. Though this was primarily due to a general increase in the number of officers, it shows that there was no ban on the employment of the Hindus.³³

That Aurangzeb's religious policy was unpopular at the time is true, but that it was an important factor, as usually charged, in the downfall of the empire, is doubtful. The Hindu uprisings of his reign seem to have had no wide religious appeal, and they were suppressed with the help of Hindu leaders. Their significance comes in the following reigns, when the rulers were no longer able to meet opposition as effectively—and as ruthlessly—as had Aurangzeb. His religious policy aimed at strengthening an empire already overextended in Shah Jahan's time; that it failed in its objective is probably true, but the mistake should not be made of assuming that the attempt was a major element in the later political decay. It should be seen, rather, as part of an unsuccessful attempt to stave off disaster. Seen in this light, his religious policy is one element, but not a causal one, save in its failure to achieve its intended goal, among the many that have to be considered in seeking an understanding of Aurangzeb's difficulties.

Cultural Scenario

Even though the Mughal Empire existed 300-500 years ago, its influence still exists in current day India. The social aspects of the Mughal Empire and India today especially relate including family life, religion art, music, and literature, education. Regions of Mughal authority lasted longer than the empire itself. Even the British used Mughal titles and engaged in rituals of respect for the Mughal emperor until 1802. This resilient authority came from the fact that regions had changed fundamentally as political territories under Mughal supremacy. The process of change combined elements drawn from many sources. Most importantly, however, an elite imperial society imbued with Indo-Persian culture had emerged in all the Mughal regions.

Vicious Mongol attacks on cities and towns across southern Eurasia launched centuries of migration into India. Warriors, scholars, mystics, merchants, artists, artisans, peasants, and workers followed ancient trade routes and new opportunities that opened up in the new domains of Indians. Migrants walked and rode down the Hindu Kush; they travelled from town to town, across Punjab, down the Ganga basin, into Bengal, down the Indus into Sind and Gujarat, across the Vindhya, into the Deccan, and down the coast. They moved and resettled to find work, education, patronage, influence, adventure, and better living. They travelled these routes for five centuries, never in large numbers compared to the resident population; but as time went by, new-comers settled more often where others had settled before; and their accumulation, natural increase, and local influence changed societies all across India forever. This was one of the world's most significant long-term migratory patterns; and it not only carried people and wealth into India but also a complemented flow of commodities from India to West Asia and Europe.³⁴

Regions of southern Asia were lands of wealth and opportunity. People came. Immigrants altered societies most where they settled most commonly, in urban centres along trade routes. Agra being a big urban centre and on one of the major trade route was always affected. Among the overland migrants who came into India primarily from southern regions of Central and West Asia, two social categories can be usefully distinguished. Leading the way, warriors organized fighters, military suppliers, and service providers on ethnic lines in groups defined by tribe, clan, and lineage, mostly Turks and Afghans. Even these groups were multi-ethnic, but groups in the second, non-military category, were even more so. Migrants in both categories coming from Persia increased over time, especially after 1556, when Persian literati came into the Mughal service and the centre of gravity of Persian culture shifted into India. Most immigrants were Muslim non-combatants. They generated multi-cultural centres of social change, mostly in and around urban centres. They caused huge leap urbanization. Historical documentation also increased with waves of immigration, often as a consequence of patronage by emperors. Most new documentation pertains to the emperors' activities and interests, rather than to those of ordinary immigrants.³⁵



From the thirteenth to sixteenth century, Turk and Afghan warriors pushed old medieval dynasties into subordinate positions and carved out independent domains for themselves. They formed a new, culturally distinct, ruling class, poised above old dynastic clans and village elites.³⁶

Centuries of competitive interaction imbued military rulers with many common traits. Subordination, alliance-building, emulation, and learning brought cultural borrowing, diffusion, and amalgamation. In new dynastic domains, a new kind of cultural complex emerged that gave rulers many options, one of which was to define Hindu and Muslim religious sects in opposition to one another, but they more typically engaged in multi-cultural patronage.³⁷

The spirit and practice of Hindu *bhakti* mingled with those of Muslim *sufi* mysticism around saintly exemplars of spiritual power and in music, poetry, and eclectic divine experience. Spiritual guides, teachers, mystics, poets, festivities, and sacrificial offerings attracted people who worshiped at temples and mosques. Turkish, Afghan, Persian, and regional Hindu aesthetic and engineering motifs mingled in the arts, fortresses, palaces, and consumer taste. The regalia of royalty formed a symbolic language of honour that was spoken by rulers of all religions, who recognized one another's authority and engaged in common rituals of rank. Rajas and sultans fought, taxed, invested, administered, and transacted with one another using the same lexicon and technologies, learning from one another.³⁸

During the time of the Mughal Empire, there was a lot of mixed culture. There was combined Islamic, Persian, and native Indian themes. Art especially thrived during this time because it was a very rich and important part of their culture, and to the emperors of this time. Many painters, poets, and artisans had a dream to one-day work in India because it had

such an art enriched cultural environment. Poetry was also a big accomplishment in Indian culture during the Mughal Empire. Most poetry was written in Persia because it was the official language until the sack of Delhi in 1739, and Urdu became the new language after that.³⁹

The new dynastic capital Agra was located in the most fertile agricultural tracts and in strategic sites along a route of communication, march, and supply. As new dynastic domains grew richer, forts became fortified cities with palaces, large open courtyards, gardens, fountains, garrisons, stables, markets, mosques, temples, shrines, and servant quarters. The architectural elaboration of fortified space became big business; it produced a new kind of urban landscape. Even the elegant Taj Mahal was encased in fortifications. Inside a typical fort, we find palace glamour as well as stables and barracks; we see a self-contained, armed city, most of whose elements came from far away. Permanent armies drawing specialist soldiers and supplies from extensive networks of trade and migration sustained these new urban centres.⁴⁰

Urbanism reached new heights under military regimes that promoted vast physical and social mobility. Armies protected trade routes and emperors built strategic roads. The army provided the surest route to upward mobility that always required extensive travel. In 1595, Abu Fazl's treatise on Akbar's reign, *A'in-i Akbari* suggests that the military may have employed (directly and indirectly) almost a quarter of the imperial population. Many men travelled long distances to fight. It became standard practice for peasants to leave their region, after the harvest each year, to fight as far away as the Deccan, to collect wages and booty, and then return home to plant the next crop. Short distance seasonal military migration became an integral feature of peasant subsistence in the Deccan. Dynasties expanded only because warriors migrated to its periphery, where they fought, settled, and attracted new waves of military migration. War pushed peasants away from home by disrupting farm operations, and by forcing villagers to feed armies. Life on the move became a common social experience for many people: seasonal migrants, people fleeing war and drought, army suppliers and camp followers, artisans moving to find work and peasants looking for new land, traders, nomads, shifting cultivators, hunters, herders, and transporters.

Altogether, people on the move for at least part of each year may have comprised half the total population of major dynastic domains in the seventeenth century.⁴¹

Many elements that would constitute modern social environments began to appear in the sixteenth century, and for this reason, we can aptly use the phrase “early modern” to refer to the period *circa* 1550-1850. In expanding agrarian regions, urbanism increased dramatically. In 1595, Abu-l Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari* mentions 180 large cities and 2,837 towns. Hierarchies of rank that distinguish central places in regional systems of authority also emerge more clearly in Mughal times. Large cities held the highest officers of state, smaller cities, lesser officers, and so on down the line. Bureaucracy and geography shaped the identities of places and thus people inside them. The highest elites were urban elites in the biggest cities, surrounded by provincial elites and local elites.⁴²

Multiple, layered sovereignties continued to thrive under the Mughals' bureaucratic standardization. Elaborate Persian imperial institutions unified a Mughal polity that also danced to the tune of personal loyalties embedded in regions where centuries of cultural mixing produced new societies. Imperial elites broadly organized by Indo-Persian institutions that spread under Mughal authority became leading figures in these societies. Their identities developed in mixtures of ethnic and religious loyalties inside their regions; but their influence and livelihoods were organized under the umbrella of Mughal supremacy.

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All foreign travellers speak of the wealth and prosperity of Mughal cities and large towns. Monserrate stated that Lahore in 1581 was "not second to any city in Europe or Asia." Finch, who travelled in the early days of Jahangir, found both Agra and Lahore to be much larger than London, and his testimony is supported by others. Other cities like Surat ("A city of good quantity, with many fair merchants and houses therein"), Ahmadabad, Allahabad, Benares, and Patna similarly excited the admiration of visitors.⁴⁴

In India three fourths of the population lived in villages and the other one forth lived in urban areas.⁴⁵ The caste system existed in India. People were unequal in India

due to the caste system; in the villages there was segregation. The higher and more powerful castes lived towards the centre of the village. There was usually a senior male, who was in charge, and senior female, usually related to the senior male, assigns chores to the women. Girls were usually married outside of their village, when they were teenagers .⁴⁶ People looked down upon remarried widows. Couples, when expecting, usually preferred male children because they not only made them more money but also participated in cremation of his parents. Couples dreaded having girls because they usually have to pay a large dowry, which can cause financial difficulties. Boys were expected to help in the fields and girls in the home.⁴⁷

The Hindu upper classes undoubtedly shared in the material culture of the Mughals, for, as already noted, they had a virtual monopoly of trade and finance. Furthermore, they had long held many high posts in the government. The developments in intellectual life were even more marked. The rise of Navadipa as a great centre of Sanskrit learning, and the vogue of navyanyaya (new logic) belong to this period.⁴⁸

Their caste guilds added to the skills in trade and commerce that they had learned through the centuries. Not only were their disputes settled by their panchayats, but they would frequently impose pressure on the government by organized action. Foreign visitors record that the governors and kotwals were very sensitive to this, and in spite of hardships inseparable from a despotic system of administration, the business communities had their own means of obtaining redress. Bernier, writing during Aurangzeb's time, declared that the Hindus possessed "almost exclusively the trade and wealth of the country."⁴⁹ If Muslims enjoyed advantages in higher administrative posts and in the army, Hindu merchants maintained the monopoly in trade and finance that they had had during the sultanate. A Dutch traveller in the early seventeenth century was struck by the fact that few Muslims engaged in handicraft industries, and that even when a Muslim merchant did have a large business, he employed Hindu bookkeepers and agents.⁵⁰ Banking was almost exclusively in Hindu hands. In the years of the decline of the Mughals, a rich Hindu banker would finance his favourite rival claimant for the throne. The role of Jagat Seth of Murshidabad in the history of Bengal is well known. Even the "war of succession" out of

which Aurangzeb emerged victorious was financed by a loan of five and a half lakhs of rupees from the Jain bankers of Ahmadabad.⁵¹

The Muslim rulers had scarcely disturbed the old organization of the villages. The panchayats continued to settle most disputes, with the state impinging very little on village life, except for the collection of land revenue, and even this was very often done on a village basis rather than through individuals, with the age-old arrangements being preserved.
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The marriage customs of Hindus and Muslims had many similarities. Early marriages were much in vogue amongst the Hindus, with seven considered the proper age for a girl to be married. To leave a daughter unmarried beyond twelve years of age was to risk the displeasure of one's caste. The Muslims also betrothed their children between the ages of six and eight, but the marriage was generally not solemnized before they had attained the age of puberty. Among the wealthier classes polygamy and divorce are said to have been very common.⁵³

The custom of secluding women, known as *purdah*, was very strictly observed. Marriage negotiations were undertaken by the professional broker or the friends of either party. The marriage ceremonies were more or less the same as they are at present, and the character of the average Indian home and the socio-ethical ideas which influence it have not undergone any fundamental change. The son's duty to his parents and the wife's duty to her husband were viewed almost as religious obligations. "Superstitions played a prominent part in the daily life of the people. Charms were used not merely to ensnare a restive husband but also to secure such other ends as the birth of a son or cure of a disease. The fear of the evil eye was ever present ... and the young child was considered particularly susceptible. ... People believed in all sorts of omens."⁵⁴ Astrologers were very much in demand, even at the Mughal court. The Muslim aristocrats lived in great houses decorated with rich hangings and carpets. Their clothing was made of finest cotton or silk, decorated with gold; and they carried beautiful scimitars. There was a considerable element of ostentatious display involved in this, however, for their domestic arrangements did not match the outward splendour of their dress and equipment. Manucci, a keen observer, refers to Pathans who came to court

"well-clad and well-armed, caracoling on fine horses richly caparisoned and followed by several servants," but when they reached home, divested themselves of "all this finery, and tying a scanty cloth around their loins and wrapping a rag around their head, they take their seat on a mat, and live on ... rice and lentils or badly cooked cow's flesh of low quality, which is very abundant in the Mughal country and very cheap." ⁵⁵

The courtly manners and the elaborate etiquette of the Muslim upper classes impressed foreign visitors. In social gatherings they spoke "in a very low voice with much order, moderation, gravity, and sweetness. ... Betel and betelnut were presented to the visitors and they were escorted with much civility at the time of departure. Rigid forms were observed at meals. ... Dice was their favourite indoor game. Polo or chaugan—for which there was a special playground at Dacca—elephant-fights, hunting, excursions and picnics, were also very popular." ⁵⁶ The grandees rode in palkis, preceded by uniformed mounted servants. Many "drove in fine two-wheeled carts, carved with gilt and gold, covered in silk, and drawn by two little bulls which could race with the fastest horses." ⁵⁷

During the Mughal Empire, women had a significant role in family life. Women had an active role in Mughal tribal society, especially apparent when women fought on the battlefield. This is important and unique to this society because during the same time, in other parts of the world, women were oppressed. Some women could not even go to war with their husbands let alone fight. India's social standards were more advanced than other countries. Women also received salaries, owned land, participated in business transactions, and literary activities. Aristocratic women painted, wrote poetry, and played music because they received a higher education. ⁵⁸ The Mughal Empire was run by Muslim emperors; however India was Hindu dominated. Hindus, specifically of the upper class, adopted the Muslim practice of isolating women, called purda. This is an example of Muslim influence in a Hindu dominant culture. The Hindu practice of cremation of widows, called sati, continued even though the Mughals tried to abolish it. ⁵⁹

Akbar encouraged widow re-marriage, discouraged child marriage, outlawed the practice of sati, and persuaded Delhi merchants to set up special market days for women, who otherwise were secluded at home.⁶⁰

Although the Mughals interfered little with Hindu customs, there was one ancient practice which they sought to stop. This was sati, or the custom of widows, particularly those of the higher classes, burning themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres. Akbar had issued general orders prohibiting sati, and in one noteworthy case, personally intervened to save a Rajput princess from immolating herself on the bier of her husband. Similar efforts continued to be made in the succeeding reigns. According to the European traveller Pelsaert, governors did their best to dissuade widows from immolating themselves, but by Jahangir's orders were not allowed to withhold their sanction if the woman persisted.⁶¹ Tavernier, writing in the reign of Shah Jahan, observed that widows with children were not allowed in any circumstances to burn, and that in other cases governors did not readily give permission, but could be bribed to do so.⁶² Aurangzeb was most forthright in his efforts to stop sati. According to Manucci, on his return from Kashmir in December, 1663, he "issued an order that in all lands under Mughal control, never again should the officials allow a woman to be burnt." Manucci adds that "This order endures to this day."⁶³ This order, though not mentioned in the formal histories, is recorded in the official guidebooks of the reign.⁶⁴ Although the possibility of an evasion of government orders through payment of bribes existed, later European travellers record that sati was not much practiced by the end of Aurangzeb's reign. As Ovington says in his *Voyage to Surat*: "Since the Mahometans became Masters of the Indies, this execrable custom is much abated, and almost laid aside, by the orders which nabobs receive for suppressing and extinguishing it in all their provinces. And now it is very rare, except it be some Rajah's wives, that the Indian women burn at all."⁶⁵

The good health of the local inhabitants finds special mention by Fryer, "the country people lived to a good old age, supposed to be the reward of their temperance." Bernier also speaks of "general habits of sobriety among the people," though this did not apply to a few cases among the upper classes or the royal family.⁶⁶ The European travellers found "less vigour among the people than in the colder climates, but greater enjoyment of

health." From their accounts, even the climate would appear to have been healthy. "Gout, stone complaints in the kidneys, catarrh ... are nearly unknown; and persons who arrive in the country afflicted with any of these disorders soon experience a complete cure." The Mughal emphasis on physical fitness and encouragement of out-of-door manly games also raised the general standard of health. The ideal was that everyone was to be trained to be a soldier, a good rider, a keen shikari, and able to distinguish himself in games.⁶⁷

Since the days of Firoz Tughluq (1351–1388) Public hospitals had been provided, the system seems to have been extended during the Mughal period. Jahangir states in his autobiography that on his accession to the throne he ordered the establishment, at government expense, of hospitals in large cities. That this order was actually made effective is shown by the records of salaries paid by the government and of grants for the distribution of medicine.⁶⁸

Without vigorous educational activity at the capitals—both Delhi and Agra—the cultural achievements of the Mughal period would scarcely have been possible. During Akbar's reign the "mental sciences"—logic, philosophy, and scholastic theology—had taken on new importance. About the same time, we notice a very considerable improvement in the teaching of the religious sciences.⁶⁹

The standardization of the educational curriculum was accomplished in the eighteenth century. The Dars-i-Nizamiya, named after Mulla Nizam-ud-din (d.1748) provided instruction in grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, logic, scholasticism, *tafsir* (commentary on the Quran), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *hadith*, and mathematics. This curriculum has been criticized for containing too many books on grammar and logic and in general for devoting too much attention to formal subjects, and too little to useful secular subjects like history and natural sciences or even religious subjects like *tafsir* and *hadith*.⁷⁰

Education was confined not only to men. Many Muslim women were patrons of literature and themselves writers. The memoirs of Gulbadan Begum, Akbar's aunt, are well known, and his foster-mother, Maham Anga, endowed a college at Delhi. Akbar's wife

Salima Sultana, the famous Empress Mumtaz Mahal, and Aurangzeb's sister, the Princess Jahan Ara Begum, were poetesses of note, as was his daughter, Zeb-un-Nissa.⁷¹

The spread of knowledge and intellectual development is linked up with the growth of libraries. Printing was not introduced in northern India till after the end of the Muslim rule, but hundreds of katibs (calligraphists) were available in every big city, and no Muslim noble would be considered cultured, unless he possessed a good library. The royal palaces contained immense libraries. According to Father Manrique, the library of Agra in 1641 contained 24,000 volumes, valued at six and a half million rupees.⁷²

Persian was the language of Mughal intellectual life. Since the Ghaznavid occupation of Lahore in the beginning of the eleventh century, Persian had been the official language of the Muslim government and the literary language of the higher classes, but with the advent of the Mughals it entered a new era. Hitherto Persian had reached India mainly from Afghanistan, Turkistan, and Khorasan, and had many common features with Tajik. With the establishment of closer relations between India and Iran after Humayun's visit to that country, and the arrival of a large number of distinguished Iranis in the reign of Jahangir and later Mughal rulers, the linguistic and literary currents began to flow from Iran itself. Shiraz and Isfahan now replaced Ghazni and Bukhara in literary inspiration, with considerable refining of the language as a result.⁷³

A large number of prominent Irani poets, including Urfi, Naziri, Talib, and Kalim, migrated to India, and at times the level of Persian literature was higher in Mughal India than in Iran. Unluckily the style of poetry, which was popular in both countries at this time, was the subtle and involved type made popular by Fighani of Shiraz. This school of poetry culminated in Bedil, the best known poet of Aurangzeb's reign. His similes and metaphors are often obscure, but his poetry is marked by great originality and profundity of thought.⁷⁴ From love, the traditional preoccupation of Persian poets, he turned to the problems of life and human behaviour, and in certain circles (particularly in Afghanistan and Tajikistan) he ranks high as a philosophical poet. But the two poets who outshone all others in a distinguished group were Faizi and Ghalib. Faizi (1547–1595), whose genius matured

before the large-scale immigration of poets from Iran and the introduction of the "new" school of poetry, was the brother of Abu'l Fazl. As Akbar's poet-laureate, his poetry mirrors a triumphant age. Ghalib (1796–1869), who was attached to the court of the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah, began in the style of Bedil, but soon outgrew it and came under the spell of the immigrant Irani poets—Urfi, Naziri, Zahuri, and Hazin. His maturer work epitomizes all that is best in the different schools of Mughal poetry—the profundity and originality of Bedil's thought, combined with the polished diction of Urfi and Naziri. He wrote largely of love and life, but the deep, melancholy note in his poetry reflects the sad end to which the Mughal Empire was drawing in his day.⁷⁵

History and biography were most extensively cultivated during the Mughal period. Historians include Abu'l Fazl (1551–1602), whose comprehensive *Akbar Nama* is one of the most important historical works produced in India; Badauni (1540–1615), who wrote with bias and even venom, yet who was a consummate artist, a master of the telling phrase, and capable of evoking a living picture with a few deft strokes; the intelligent and orderly Firishta; Khafi Khan; and the author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*, the last of the great Mughal historical works.⁷⁶ Among biographical works, Babur's autobiography, originally written in Turkish, but soon translated into elegant Persian by Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, is the best. There were, however, other biographical works, including the comprehensive *Ma'asir'ul-umara* dealing with the Mughal nobility, and numerous biographies of saints, poets, and statesmen. A very interesting historical work written during Aurangzeb's reign is *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, which has been translated into English under the misleading title "School of Manners," but which is really a "History of Religions." The author, who belonged to the band of the writers and thinkers around Dara Shukoh, gives considerable first-hand information about non-Muslim sects.⁷⁷

It is characteristic of the Mughals that, next to Persian, the language which received the greatest patronage at court was Hindi and Urdu. The practice started in Akbar's day of having a Hindi *kavi rai* (poet-laureate) along with the Persian *malik-ul-shuara*. Already Muslim poets such as Jaisi and Kabir had enriched the Hindi language. Among Hindus, the greatest Hindi poet of Akbar's days was the famous Tulasidas, whose career was

spent far from the worldly courts. There were, however, well-known Hindi poets amongst Akbar's courtiers. Raja Birbal (1528–1583) was the kavi rai, but the works of Akbar's famous general Abdul Rahim have been better preserved. A skilful writer in Hindi, Abdul Rahim furthered the development of the language by extending his patronage to a number of other poets who used it. The title of kavi rai continued to be conferred even in Aurangzeb's time, and two of his sons, Azam and Muazzam, who ascended the throne as Bahadur Shah, were known to be patrons of Hindi literature. It is interesting to observe that during the later Mughal period Hindi poets like Bihari followed the same ornate style which was popular with the contemporary Persian poets.⁷⁸

Particular styles of painting which developed in India had their origin in the courts of the relatives of the Mughals at Herat and elsewhere. Babur himself, although he had some painters in his service, made no efforts to foster the art in his newly won empire.⁷⁹

To Humayun must go the credit for the founding of the Mughal School of painting. During his wanderings in Persia and what is now Afghanistan he came across painters who had studied under Behzad, and persuaded Khwaja Abdul Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali, the pupil of Behzad, to join his court at Kabul in 1550. They accompanied him to Delhi, forming the nucleus of the Mughal School.⁸⁰

This school was properly developed under Akbar, who organized it with his usual zeal. It was under his direct supervision, and the more prominent of the hundred or so painters were granted ranks in the governmental structure as mansabdars or ahadis. The painters worked in a large building at Fathpur Sikri, and, according to Abu'l Fazl, "the works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the daroghas (supervisors) and the clerks; he then confers rewards according to the excellence of workmanship or increases the monthly salaries."⁸¹

Khwaja Abdul Samad was the head of the establishment and was known by the title of *shirin qalam* (or "sweet pen"), referring to his skill in calligraphy. Later he became master of the mint (1577) and subsequently was appointed diwan at Multan.⁸²

There was a small number of Persian artists, and, in course of time, a preponderance of Hindus. They had had previous training in wall-painting and joined with the Persian painters between 1570 and 1585 in decorating the walls of Akbar's new capital. They were quick to learn the principles and techniques of Persian art, and the joint efforts of Persian and Indian artists soon led to the rise of the distinct style of Mughal painting. The foreign artists included Khwaja Abdul Samad, Farrukh Beg, and Khusrau Quli. Among the Hindus Basawan Lal and Daswant were preeminent. Occasionally many artists collaborated in the painting of a single picture, the leading artists sketching the composition and other painters putting in the parts at which they were expert.⁸³



Akbar's artists specialized in portraiture and book illustration. The emperor's album containing likenesses not only of Akbar and the royal family but of all the grandees of the realm has been lost, but many examples of book illustrations of the period have survived:

Razm Nama at Jaipur, *Babur Nama* in the British Museum, and the *Akbar Nama* in the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁸⁴

Jahangir's best known painters were Agha Raza of Herat and his son Abul Hasan; the Kalmuck artist, Farrukh Beg; Muhammad Nadir and Muhammad Murad, both of Samarqand; Ustad Mansur, the leading animal painter; Bishan Das; Manohar; and Govardhan. These and many others were constantly in attendance on the emperor at the capital and during his travels. They were commissioned to paint any incident or scene that struck the emperor's fancy. When a Mughal embassy visited Persia it was accompanied by the painter Bishan Das, who painted for Jahangir the likenesses of the Safavid king and his courtiers. The court painters have left a record of the public men of note that is probably unequalled for fidelity and artistry. It is regrettable that these portraits have not yet been utilized as a source material for social history.⁸⁵

Under Shah Jahan painting, like all the other arts, continued to flourish. He reduced the number of court painters, keeping only the very best and forcing others to seek the patronage of the princes and the nobles; but the art did not suffer by this. Dara Shukoh was a patron of painting, and nobles like Zafar Khan, the governor of Kashmir, who had a beautiful anthology of the works of the living poets prepared, illustrated with their paintings, and employed many artists. Other painters set up studios in the bazaars. An interesting feature of the period, typical of the general predominance of the indigenous elements in various spheres—in the secretariat, literature, and music—was that only one Persian artist was employed by Shah Jahan. The preponderance of the Hindus among court painters is indicative of the emancipation of the local school from dependence on Iran, as well as the importance of Hindus in all spheres of life. The excellence of Mughal painting depended not only on the taste of individual ruler but on his prosperity, and with the disintegration of the empire, the artists migrated from the capital to other centres like Oudh and Hyderabad, where artistic standards quickly declined.

Mughals patronized music lavishly, and in this Akbar led the way. Abu'l Fazl gives the names of nearly forty prominent musicians and instrumentalists who flourished at

Akbar's court. The principal artists came from Gwalior, Malwa, Tabriz (in Iran), and Kashmir. The most famous musician of the period was Tansen. According to some Muslim chroniclers, he was brought up in the hospice of Shaikh Mohammad Ghaus of Gwalior, but Hindu tradition describes him as a disciple of Swami Haridas. It is not certain whether he formally adopted Islam, but his son, Bilas Khan, was certainly a Muslim. "A singer like him," wrote Abu'l Fazl, "has not been in India for the last two thousand years." He was not very popular with conservative Hindu musicians, who held him responsible for the deterioration of Hindu music. He is said to have falsified the ragas.⁸⁶

Although Tansen made some changes, the variety of music most extensively cultivated at Akbar's court was the ancient dhrupad. The same tradition was continued by Bilas Khan, the inventor of bilas todī. Music received great encouragement under Shah Jahan. He had thirty prominent musicians and instrumentalists at his court, who were generously rewarded for good performances. The stately dhrupad continued its sway, though there was a marked tendency towards beautification and ornamentation. The khiyal, or ornate, school of music was beginning to assert itself.⁸⁷

The social conditions during the Mughal period lead us to believe that the society moved towards an integration of its manifold political regions, social systems, and cultural inheritances. The greatness of the Mughals consisted in part at least in the fact that the influence of their court and government permeated society, giving it a new measure of harmony. The greatness of the Mughal achievement in the political unification of India was matched by the splendour and beauty of the work of the architects, poets, historians, painters, and musicians who flourished in the period. The common people suffered from poverty, disease, and the oppression of the powerful; court life was marked by intrigue and cruelty as well as by refinement of taste and elegant manners. Yet the rulers and their officials had moral standards which gave coherence to the administration and which they shared to some extent with most of their subjects. Undeniably, there were ugly scars on the face of Mughal society, but the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a quality of life that lent them a peculiar charm. The clearest reflection of this is seen in the creative arts of the period.

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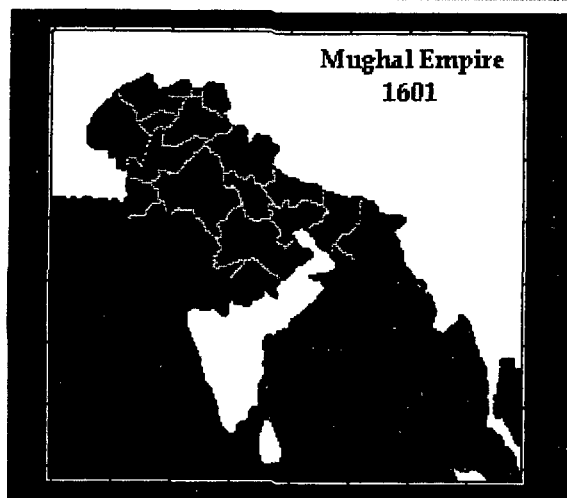
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Maps

THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, 1565

The map shown to the left are adapted from C. Collin Davies, *An Historical Atlas of the Indian Peninsula*, Oxford: UP (1949) 1967



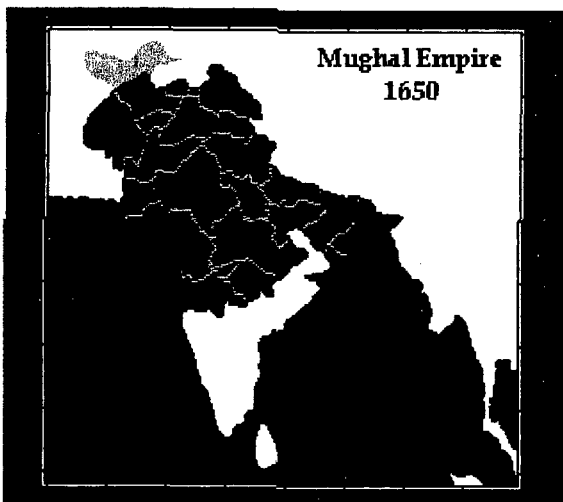
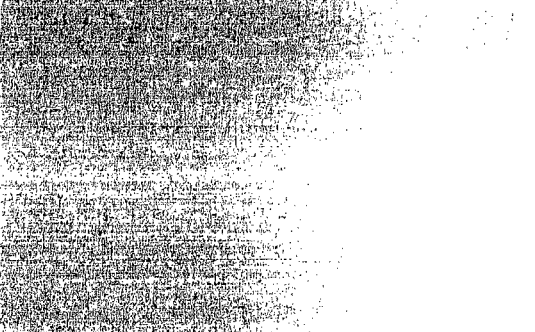
THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, 1601

The map shown to the left are adapted from Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi : Oxford UP (1982) 1986



THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, 1625

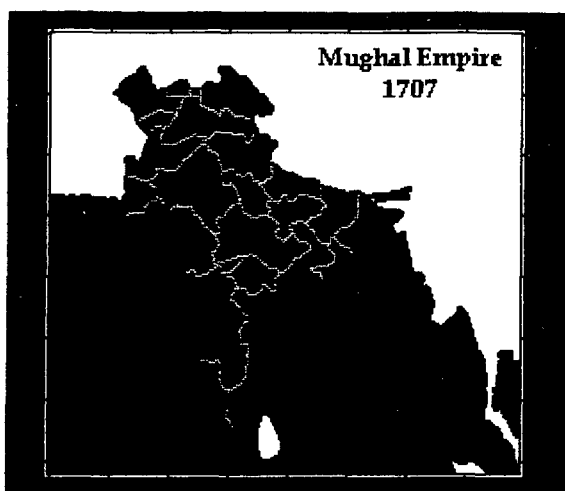
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THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, 1650

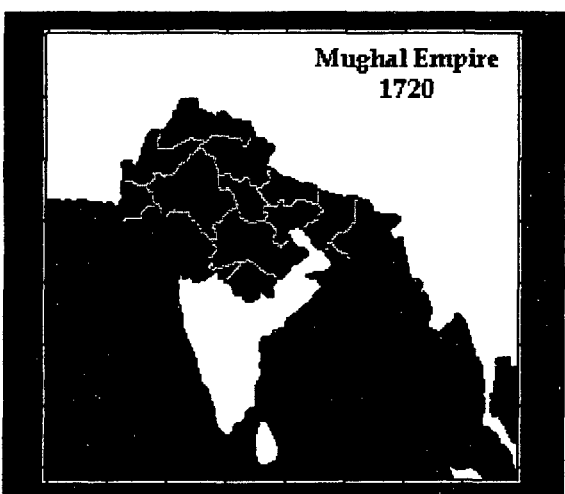
The map shown to the left are adapted from Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi : Oxford UP (1982) 1986





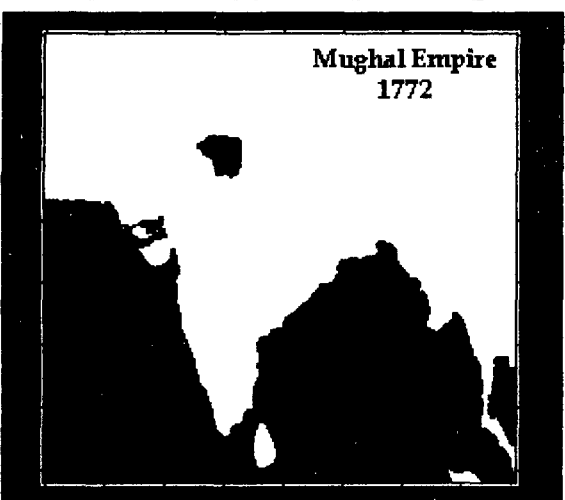
THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, 1707

The map shown to the left are adapted from Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi : Oxford UP (1982) 1986.



THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, 1720

The map shown to the left are adapted from Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi : Oxford UP (1982) 1986.



THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, 1772

The map shown to the left are adapted from C. Collin Davies, *An Historical Atlas of the Indian Peninsula*, Oxford : UP (1949) 1967.

Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi : Oxford UP (1982) 1986
A large size atlas featuring maps of the Mughal Empire and its provinces in 1601, commented. The atlas does not attempt to show a series of maps featuring chronological development.

C. Collin Davies, *An Historical Atlas of the Indian Peninsula*, Oxford : UP (1949) 1967

GLOSSARY

- 1 ABACUS - A slab that form the uppermost member of the column
- 2 ABDAR-KHANAHA - Palace apartment reserved for storing drinking water.
Akbar used to drink the Ganges water only and it was brought to, and
carefully stored in, the Abdar-khanah
- 3 ABUTMENT - Portion of a pier or wall which sustains on arch; solid
masonry which resist the lateral thrust of an arch; lateral support of a building
- 4 AIN-I-AKBARI - A three volume of work dealing primarily with code of
Akbar's regulation mainly with revenue & administration
- 5 AISLES - Wings; Portion of a building parallel to the main span.
- 6 ALCOVE - A vaulted or arched recess, given in the wall; or sunk arch or
niche with adequate depth, it is both functional & ornamental.
- 7 AMALAKA - Crowning member of domes
- 8 AMALGUZAR. A revenue collector, usually the head of a district or pargana
(q.v.)
- 9 AMIL. Under the Mughals, a revenue collector, but the term had more
general application during the sultanate.
- 10 AMIN. A revenue assessor, who decided the government's share of the
produce of the land.
- 11 AMIR. During the sultanate, a designation for officers of the third rank.
Later, amir and the plural, umara, were used for "noblemen" in general, and
to indicate officials of high rank.
- 12 AMIR-I-AKHUR. Commander of the cavalry.
- 13 AMIR-I-DAD. The law officer who carried out the decisions of the judges.
Appeals from a qazi's (q.v.) judgment could be made to him, and he
investigated complaints made against high officials.
- 14 AMIR-I-HAJIB. An official of great prestige who superintended all court
ceremonies, regulated protocol, and controlled contacts between the ruler and
his subjects. "Lord Chamberlain" is the usual translation.

- 15 AMIR-I-MAJLIS. The official who arranged the social and cultural contacts of the sultan.
- 16 AMIR-UL-UMARA. Literally, chief of nobles. This was a title conferred by a ruler, rather than an office.
- 17 ANIMATION - Depiction of living beings like birds and animals in mural (wall) paintings and architectural elements
- 18 AQUEDUCT - An artificial channel for carrying water, usually an elevated masonry or brick structure supported on arches
- 19 ARABESQUE - Surface decoration with fanciful interwining of ornamental elements like curved lines and foliage
- 20 ARCADE - Range of arches supported on piers or pillars carrying any superstructure
- 21 ARCH - An architectural device to span an opening with small wedge shaped stones, capable of supporting a superimposed load
- 22 ARCHITECT - A person who plans and designs a building; expert in building work
- 23 ARCHITECTURE - Science as well as art of planning, designing and making of buildings for public and private needs
- 24 ARCHITRAVE - A moulding surrounding or framing a doorway or a window opening inside or outside a building
- 25 ARCUATE - Style of architecture in which the structure is supported on arches.
- 26 ARIZ (or diwan-i-arz). The department of government under the sultanate concerned with maintaining the army. Usually translated "War Office" or "Ministry of War."
- 27 ARIZ-I-MUMALIK. The official during the sultanate responsible for the administration of the army, including recruiting, payment of salaries, supplies, and transportation. The office was similar to that of the mir bakshi under the Mughals. See "bakhshi."
- 28 ARTISAN - Skilled worker employed on an architectural project

- 29 ASHLAR - Dressed masonry; squared stone in regular courses in contradiction to rubble work

B

- 30 BADSHAH. See padshah.
- 31 BAGH - Islamic garden
- 32 BAKHSHI. Under the Mughals, the official who kept the army records and paid the troops. The chief paymaster in the central administration was known as the mir bakhshi, and there were subordinate bakhshis in the provinces.
- 33 BALUSTER - A pillar or column supporting a hand rail or coping, a series of such being called a balustrade; the intermediary space is usually filled with jalis.
- 34 BAOLI - Step well
- 35 BARADARI - Pillared rooms in an Islamic garden palace with 12 openings
- 36 BARID. Official in charge of intelligence and newsgathering. The barid-i-mumalik was the head of the central office, and his agents sent in reports from all over the country. This system was of great importance in controlling local governments.
- 37 BAS-RELIEF - Sculptural relief, mostly executed on the dado-panels
- 38 BASTION - A rounded projecting part of a fortification
- 39 BATTER - A determined receding upward slope in the external wall
- 40 BATTLEMENT - Parapet of a fort wall having a series of indentations or embrasures (slits), between which are raised portions known as merlons; it is also used for decoration; the whole also called crenelation
- 41 BAYS - compartment or section into which the exterior or interior of a building is divided, each section has four pillars and roof of its own
- 42 BEAM - Any horizontal structural member of bamboo, wood or stone resting upon two or more supports across and subject to a transverse load
- 43 BHAKTI. In Hinduism, devotion offered to a deity, with an emphasis on love and self-surrender.

- 44 BRACKET - A projecting member from a wall or column to support weight; it is triangular or serpentine and is richly ornamented with scrolls or volutes
- 45 BULBOUS - A dome rising like a bulb, supported on a tall cylindrical drum or base
- 46 BURJ - Chhatri; tower with an imposing superstructure
- 47 BUTTRESS - A mass of masonry built against a wall to resist the thrust of an arch or vault

C

- 48 CALIPH (*khalifa*). A representative or successor; the title adopted by the rulers of the Islamic community indicating, that as successors of Muhammad, they were both spiritual and temporal leaders. After the destruction of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258, the title was held by various rulers, including the Ottoman sultans. The office is referred to as the caliphate or khilafat.
- 49 CALLIGRAPHY - The art of writing or inscribing Arabic and Persian scripts ornamentally
- 50 CANOPY - An ornamental roof like structure
- 51 CAPITAL - The crowning feature of a column or pillar often treated with great richness of ornament, brackets spring from the capital
- 52 CASCADE - An ornamental slanting slab of stone, with a zigzag pattern, connecting a water channel on a upper lever to a small pond on a lower
- 53 CAUSE-WAYS - Raised stone paved paths connecting the main building with subsidiary structures, often with water-channels
- 54 CENOTAPH - Tombstone without actual grave; a replica of the real grave
- 55 CHABUTARAH - A raised platform
- 56 CHAMFER - An angle or edge cut-off diagonally
- 57 CHAR-BAGH - An islamic garden laid out according to a square plan and divided into four sections by canals, each having pathways, with a pavilion or building at the central point
- 58 CHEVRON - A regular zigzag pattern of straight line generally disposed horizontally on pilasters or turrets in Mughal buildings

- 59 CHHAJJA - A projecting stone feature above the arches or wall, supported on brackets to protect from rain or sun, generally slanting and broad
- 60 CHHAPARKHAT - An oblong chhatri, resting on four or eight pillars over the central arched entrance; it is distinguished from chhatri for its being oblong and always superimposing the main entrance
- 61 CHHATRI - A pillared pavilion roofed by a dome with 4, 6, 8 or more pillars and an emphatic chhajja, on the superstructure, mainly for breaking the sky line effectively
- 62 CLOISTER - A covered passage, usually around an open court with arcades on the sides of the court and walled on the opposite side
- 63 COLONNADE - Range or series of columns, set at regular intervals
- 64 COLUMN - A vertical architectural member used for support, usually consisting of a base, shaft and capital; generally circular in plan, often tapering upwards; at times polygonal or square at base
- 65 CORBEL - Block of stone projecting from a wall or pier
- 66 CORBELLING - A method of construction, where each successive block of stone projects a little beyond the one below, resembling an inverted step
- 67 CORNICE - Projecting ornamental moulding along the top of a building, wall, arch, etc finishing or crowning it
- 68 CRORE (kror). Ten millions or one hundred lakhs (q.v.).
- 69 CUPOLA - A spherical roof placed like an inverted cup over a circular, square or multi angular apartment
- 70 CUSP - The point formed by the intersection of the foils; cusps divide the arch into a series of foils and are ornamental
- 71 CUSPED - Engrailed
- D**
- 72 DADO - Lower portion of the wall from pavement to approximately waist height reserved for decoration
- 73 DALAN - Verandah of an Islamic building; cloister

- 74 DARGAH - The place or complex where the Mazar of a muslim saint is situated and where the people assemble for religious merit
- 75 DAR-UL-HARB. "Abode of War." A land ruled by infidels that might, through war, become the "Abode of Islam," dar-ul-Islam. In the nineteenth century, some Muslims argued that India had become dar-ul-harb because of British rule.
- 76 DAR-UL-ISLAM. "Abode of Islam." A country where Islamic laws are followed and the ruler is a Muslim.
- 77 DECCAN. India south of the Vindhya Mountains, but more particularly the interior plateau.
- 78 DIWAN. 1. A ministry or department; but under the Mughals it meant specifically the financial or revenue ministry (diwani). 2. In the provincial administration, the diwan had judicial power in civil cases as well as having control of revenue collection. 3. The term was also applied to the royal court and the council that advised the ruler. 4. The word is also used for the collected works of a poet.
- 79 DIWAN-I-AM - Hall of public audience; ceremonial place for the general assembly
- 80 DIWAN-I-ARZ. See ariz.
- 81 DIWAN-I-KHALSA (khalisa). The office in charge of the lands reserved as sources of revenue for the state.
- 82 DIWAN-I-KHASS - Hall of private audience reserved for important noble, to conduct confidential and important business of the state
- 83 DIWAN-I-MAZALIM. A court presided over by the ruler in which petitions were received, complaints against officials were heard, and to which appeals could be made from other courts.
- 84 DIWAN-I-TAN. The office responsible for payment of salaries.
- 85 DOAB. "Two rivers." The land lying between two rivers, particularly the area between the Ganges and the Jamna.

- 86 DOME - A masonry roof built on a circular plan, usually hemispherical in shape, erected over a square, octagonal or circular space in a building on four arches or vaults, on the arcuate system
- 87 DOUBLE DOME - A dome which is hollow inside; it has two layers, one which is in the interior and roofs the room below, the other or the external surface which proclaims the monument from afar.
- 88 DRUM - Base or neck of the dome on which it rests; it gives elevation to the dome and plays an important part in its total effect
- 89 DURBAR (darbar). The court of a ruler, or an audience granted by him.

E

- 90 EAVES - The lower part of a roof projecting beyond the face of the wall
- 91 EMBRASURE - Small opening in the wall or parapet of a fortified building through which the archers could shoot
- 92 ENAMELLING - Process in which glaze and colour were mix together and applied on tiles and fused by heat
- 93 ENGRAILED ARCH - An arch with multi foils along its curves; cusped arch
- 94 ENTABLATURE - The upper part of an order of architecture comprising architrave, frieze and cornice supported by colonnade
- 95 EXTRADOS - The outer curve of an arch

F

- 96 FACADE - The front elevation of a building
- 97 FARMAN (firman). An order issued by a ruler.
- 98 FAUJDAR. In the early period, the word was applied to a military officer, but under the Mughals, it meant the head of a district. Later it was used for a police official.
- 99 FINIAL - Crowning member of dome; pinnacle
- 100 FIQH. Islamic jurisprudence, or the science of interpreting the Shariat (q.v.). There are four orthodox schools: Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, and Shafii. The sources of fiqh are the Quran, hadith, ijma, and quiyas (q.v.).

- 101 FLUTING - Shallow concave grooves running vertically on the shaft of a column, pilaster or other surface
- 102 FOLIAGE - Representation of leaves, flower and branches for architectural ornamentation
- 103 FRIEZE - The middle division of the entablature generally reserved for calligraphy or other ornamentation
- 104 FRINGE - A continuous, garland like series along the interior of an arch

G

- 105 GABLE - Triangular roof
- 106 GADDI (gadi). The cushion or seat on which a ruler sits, hence, "throne."
- 107 GEOMETRICAL DESIGNS - Patterns composed of geometrical elements; trigon, square, rectangle, pentagon, stars or motifs, with straight or curved lines
- 108 GHANIMAH. The spoils of war. In original Islamic practice, four-fifths of all the captured goods went to the army, and a fifth was taken for pious purposes. Under the sultanate, the state took four-fifths and one-fifth was given to the soldiers.
- 109 GHANTA-MALA - Bell and chain motif used for the ornamentation of shafts of pillars, in carving, e.g. at Fatehpur Sikri
- 110 GHAZAL. A short poem, usually on a theme dealing with love.
- 111 GLASS MOSAIC - Mosaic in which uniform coloured stained convex glass pieces are used in plaster to make up a design
- 112 GLAZED TILE MOSAIC - Tile overlaid with chemicalized colours fused in excessive heat under a specialized process, used for architectural ornamentation
- 113 GLAZING - Process in which specially prepared colours (obtained from metallic oxides and fusible chemicals) are pasted first and then coated over with the glaze (made of sand and chemicals) and then the whole is fused; in this process the glaze retains its identity over the colour
- 114 GUMBAD - Local name for dome

H

- 115 HADITH (hadis). A saying or reported action of Muhammad that is not found in the Quran, but that is accepted as a source of fiqh (q.v.).
- 116 HAJJ. Annual pilgrimage made to Mecca; every Muslim is supposed to make the journey at least once in a lifetime.
- 117 HAMMAM - Bath-room or the bath-complex contained in an independent building
- 118 HANAFI. A school of Islamic jurisprudence. See fiqh.
- 119 HANBALI. A school of Islamic jurisprudence. See fiqh.
- 120 HAREM - Women's quarters; secluded part of the palace or residence reserved for the ladies of the household
- 121 HINDUSTANI. 1. Any native of North India (Hindustan). 2. The term was applied to the Indian converts to Islam. 3. As an adjective, is used to describe the products of the fusion of Islamic and Hindu influences; e.g., Hindustani music.

I

- 122 IBADAT KHANAH - Place or house of worship on prayer or religious discourses, e.g. Akbar's famous four-quatered Ibadat Khana at Fatehpur Sikri
- 123 IJMA. The consensus of the Islamic community as a source of law. See fiqh.
- 124 IMAM. A leader of the Islamic community. Among the Shias (q.v.), the descendants of Ali.
- 125 INAM. A gift or reward; particularly applied to lands which were granted rent-free.
- 126 INCISED PAINTING - Scheme of mural painting executed in the Mughal buildings in stylised designs, with two colours Safeda and Hirmich, applied successively in two layers, the upper one scrapped off according to the design, giving a relief effect, eg. in the Mehman-Khanah of the Taj Mahal
- 127 INLAY - Ornamentation composed of specially cut pieces of rare or semi precious stones, laid in the sockets to make a design
- 128 INTRADOS - Inner curve of an arch

- 129 IQTA. A form of grant made by the sultants. The grantee had rights of revenue collection but not property rights, which were retained by the state. This tenure corresponded to the jagir (q.v.) of the Mughals.
- 130 IWAN - Central arched entrance or portal in the centre of the facade of a building
- J**
- 131 JAGIR. The term used during Mughal rule for iqta tenures. The holder of land under the jagir system was known as a jagirdar. The assignment of land was usually made for a lifetime, and it was not inheritable. Jagir tenures were different from inam (q.v.) in that they carried an obligation to perform services for the state.
- 132 JALI - Latticed or perforated screen of stone
- 133 JAMBS - Sides of doors or windows, or their frames
- 134 JAMI MASJID - Congregational Mosque; Friday Mosque
- 135 JHAJJHARI - Jalied stone curtain around a set of grave; eg. in the Taj Mahal
- 136 JHAROKHA - A Jalied, stone window projecting from the wall face of a building, in an upper storey, overlooking a street, Market, court or any other open space
- 137 JIHAD. A righteous war against unbelievers.
- 138 JIZYA. Tax paid by zimmi (q.v.) in a Muslim society.
- K**
- 139 KALASH - Ancient Indian water-pot; integral part of the Mughal finial used to crown the domes and cupolas of chhatris
- 140 KANGURA - Stepped battlement
- 141 KARKHANA - Place where commodities for state use were produced or stored
- 142 KAVI RAI. "Prince of Poets," or poet-laureate. A title used by the Mughals.
- 143 KEY STONE - Central stone of an arch
- 144 KHALIFAH. See caliph.

- 145 KHALSA. See diwan-i-khalsa.
- 146 KHAN. A Turkish title. Under the sultanate, it designated a particular rank in the military service, but it was frequently used to indicate ethnic affiliations (e.g., the Pathans) or by anyone claiming its connotation of "brave and heroic."
- 147 KHANAH - House or room; the concerned department or building where different wares were produced and stored
- 148 KHAPREL - Curved, or flat burnt earthen tiles used alternatively for roofing
- 149 KHARIJ. Originally, the tribute paid by conquered populations, but in India it came to mean simply the land tax, or the proportion of the produce claimed by the state.
- 150 KHAS MAHAL - Personal palace, or one of its most gorgeous apartments, for the exclusive use by the Emperor.
- 151 KHUTBA. Sermon delivered in the mosque on Fridays. Mention in it of a ruler's name was a declaration of a claim for sovereignty.
- 152 KHWABGAH - Sleeping chamber of the Emperor; it was an entirely secluded apartment with in the precincts of the Harem and was carefully guarded.
- 153 KHWAJA. A Persian title of respect. In the sultanate it was used for the official in each province who kept the revenue accounts.
- 154 KIOSK - An open summer-house or pavillion usually having its roof supported by pillars.
- 155 KIRTTI-MUKHA - Literally Mouth-of-Glory; a popular ornamental motif in the Mughal architecture used chiefly in the bases of pillar; originally Gavaksa or sun window of Buddhist and Brahmanical architecture.
- 156 KOS. A land measure, varying in different parts of India from one mile to two.
- 157 KOS-MINAR - Tapering, massive towers or minars (without stairway) on each kos on the main road of the Mughal Empire; like modern mile stones.

- 158 KOTWAL. A term applied to various local officials, but usually to the officer who was responsible for police functions in a town or rural area.

L

- 159 LAKH. One hundred thousand.
- 160 LATTICE - A jali or perforated screen.
- 161 LATTICE WINDOW - A window divided into small panels arranged diagonally.
- 162 LINTEL - A horizontal architectural member of wood or stone, laid across an opening like a door or window, to hold up the superstructure.
- 163 LIWAN - The pillared cloister of mosque.
- 164 LOTIFORM - Lotus shaped

M

- 165 MADRASA. A school for Islamic studies, usually associated with a mosque.
- 166 MAJLIS-KHANA - An assembly hall
- 167 MALIK. Under the sultanate, a title indicating a military rank, but later used as a general title of honor. Also used for a person who owns land.
- 168 MALIKI. A school of Islamic jurisprudence. See fiqh.
- 169 MANSAB. A rank in the Mughal army based on the number of horsemen the officer was supposed to bring into the field. Mansabdars, the holders of the rank, were graded from those responsible for ten horses up to those who were responsible for ten thousand.
- 170 MAQBARAH - Tomb; the room or small covered building which contains the grave.
- 171 MAQSURAH - Arcade; screen or series of arches on the facade of a building.
- 172 MAUND. A measure of weight, roughly equal to eighty pounds, but varying greatly in different areas.
- 173 MAZAR - Grave or tomb of a saint
- 174 MEDALLIONS - Circular motifs used generally in the spandrels of the arches.

- 175 MERLON - One of the solid or tooth like portion of a battlement between the embrasures.
- 176 MIHRAB - The niche or arched recess in the western wall of the mosque towards which worshippers turn for prayer.
- 177 MIMBAR - Series of steps (generally three) attached to the Mihrab for the Imam to stand upon to lead the congregation or issue sermons, pulpit in the mosque.
- 178 MINAR - A detached self standing tapering tower generally multi-storeyed with an inner stairway.
- 179 MIR BAKHSHI. See bakhshi.
- 180 MIR SAMAN. The official in charge of the imperial household stores, the workshops for producing goods for the palaces, and the arsenals.
- 181 MLECCHA. Sanskrit term for a non-Indian, meaning "barbarian"; often used for the Muslim invaders.
- 182 MOAT - A deep wide trench or ditch filled with water generally artificial, around the fortification, to make access difficult.
- 183 MOHALLA. A subdivision of a city.
- 184 MONUMENT - Architectural memorial; a formal building erected either over a tomb or elsewhere as a memorial; commemorative structure.
- 185 MORTAR - Mixture of lime sand and water for joining stones and bricks.
- 186 MOSAIC - Decoration; formed of small pieces of hard substances such as glass, stone and marble, generally multi-coloured to form a design.
- 187 MOTIF - The dominant or distinctive feature or element of a design.
- 188 MOULDINGS - Contours given to projecting members
- 189 MUHTASIB. The overseer of public morality.
- 190 MUJTAHID. A man who through learning and piety is able to undertake the interpretation and application of the Islamic law in such a way that his judgments should be followed by others.
- 191 MULLAH. A teacher of the law and doctrines of Islam.
- 192 MULTIFOIL - An arch having more than five cusps

- 193 MURAL - A form of wall painting.
- 194 MUSHRIF. The officer responsible for keeping the account of state income during the sultanate.
- 195 MUSTAUFİ. The official responsible for expenditure and for the auditing of accounts.

N

- 196 NAİB. A deputy, lieutenant, or assistant, as in the title, naib wazir.
- 197 NAQQAR-KHANAĦ/NAUBAT-KHANAĦ - Upper chamber over the gateway where ceremonial music was performed at fixed timings or to announce arrival.
- 198 NAVE - Central point or compastmsut of the sanctuary of mosque, which contains muhrab and mimbar and is invariably roofed by a dome.
- 199 NAWAB. Originally used for the viceroy or governor of a province of the Mughal empire, but later used simply as a title.
- 200 NAZİM. Term used for a provincial governor, particularly indicating his function as administrator of the criminal law.
- 201 NICHE - A sunk arch or recess given in the wall either as a receptacle or for breaking the monotony of the plain wall.
- 202 NİZAM. A governor, particularly the viceroy of the Deccan.
- 203 NOOK-SHAFT - Technically corners pillar; a beautifully carved pilastes attached to the sides of an arch or angles of an structure (generally with a cheveron or rope pattern in mughal architecture).

O

- 204 OGEE - A moulding of an arch made up of an convex and concave curve, i.e. with a S. shaped profile.
- 205 ORIEL - A window projecting from the wall face of the building and supported on brackets.

P

- 206 PADMAKOSHA

- 207 PADSHAH. King, emperor. A title used by the Mughal rulers.
- 208 PANCHAYAT. A traditional Indian village court (made up of five elders) that judged petty cases and controlled local affairs.
- 209 PARAPET - The portion of wall above the roof.
- 210 PARGANA. A subdivision of the basic administrative unit, the sarkar, made up of a number of villages.
- 211 PAVILION - An ornamental structure in an open space, terrace or garden, it is generally pillared in Indo-Muslim architecture.
- 212 PEDESTAL - Base of an upright structure
- 213 PENDENTIVE - A triangular curved over hanging surface by means of which a circular dome is supported on a square or polygonal compartment.
- 214 PESHTA. The Chief Minister of the Maratha rulers. The office became hereditary, and in the eighteenth century the peshwa was virtually an independent ruler.
- 215 PHANSIGHAR - Private execution house of the Mughals situated in the basement below the main palaces, e.g. under the Jhahjahani Mahal at Agra fort.
- 216 PIER - A mass of masonry (stone or brick) which supports superstructures
- 217 PIETRADURA - Florentine mosaic of semi-precious stones
- 218 PIGMENTS - Colours or other materials used as colours in an architectural painting.
- 219 PILASTER - A vertical rectangular member projecting from the wall.
- 220 PINNACLE - A small turret like ornamental termination of the top of pilaster, buttresses, turrets, parapets or else where often ornamented with bunches of foliage or lotus petals.
- 221 PIR. The head of a Sufi order; later, a Sufi saint.
- 222 PLASTER - A pasty mixture of lime and water, with other ingredients used for coating brick or stone wall and ceilings to cover the uneven rubble or masonry construction.

- 223 PLINTH - Projecting stepped or moulded base of a building; platform over which the building stands.
- 224 POL - GATE, Gateway
- 225 POLYCHROME - Multi coloured ornamentation.
- 226 PORCH - A structure sheltering the entrance to a building.
- 227 PORTICO - A roofed space open or partially enclosed forming the entrance and centre of the facade.
- 228 PULPIT - A raised stepped structure from which a sermon is preached or the Imam leads the congregation; generally with three steps.
- 229 PURNA-KALASA - Full vase; one of the most popular motif of traditional Indian architectural ornamentation. In Indo-Muslim architecture, it is used as an architectural component as a Kalash-finial and also as an ornamental motif, like the Vase-and-foliage, for dado decoration, the best e.g. of which comes from the mortuary hall of the Taj Mahal.

Q

- 230 QASIDA. A long, usually panegyric, poem, or ode.
- 231 QAZI. The judge who administered Islamic law. Qazi-i-mumalik was the chief judge of the kingdom.
- 232 QIBLAH - Portion of the closed wall of the nave of the mosque denoting the direction of the Kaabah in Mecca.
- 233 QIYAS. One of the sources of fiqh (q.v.); the process of applying hadith (q.v.) to new situations by the use of analogy.
- 234 QUOIN - The dressed stones at the corners of a building, usually laid so that their faces are alternately large and small.
- 235 QURAN (Koran). For Muslims, the Word of God. The fundamental source of fiqh (q.v.) and all rules governing human relationships.

R

- 236 RAIYAT (ryot). Cultivator, peasant.

- 237 RAIYATWARI. A system of revenue assessment and collection in which the government officials dealt with the actual cultivator, not an intermediary.
- 238 RAMP - A slope or sloped passage or inclined plain connecting two levels; generally attached to gateway or other structure
- 239 RAMPART - A stone or earth wall surrounding a castle, fortress or fortified city for defence purpose.
- 240 RANDOM RUBBLE MASONRY - Formed of stones of irregular size.
- 241 RELIEF - Elevation of a design from a plane surface; any ornamentation which relieves the monotony of the plain surface by providing it a depth and giving a three dimensional effect.
- 242 ROSETTE - A conventional ornament carved or modelled to resemble a rose.
- 243 RUPEE (rupiya). A silver coin introduced by Sher Shah in 1542 which became the standard unit of the Indian currency system. In 1800 it was worth about two shillings.

S

- 244 SADR (sadar). Chief or supreme. A term especially used in connection with the chief religious offices. The sadr-ul-sadur advised the Mughal emperor on religious matters, controlled religious endowments, and had oversight of educational institutions.
- 245 SAHIB. An honorific applied to titles and names, e.g., Sahib-i-barid was the chief barid (q.v.), or intelligence officer.
- 246 SANAD. A charter or grant.
- 247 SANCTUARY - Sacred part of the mosque or any other architecture; a consecrated place.
- 248 SARKAR (sircar). A subdivision of a subah or province. The word is also used to mean simply "the government."
- 249 SARPANCH. The head of a panchayat (q.v.).
- 250 SAYYID (said, syed). A chief. Also a name used by those who claim descent from Husain, the son of Muhammad's daughter, Fatima.
- 251 SEPOY (sipahi). A soldier.

- 252 SEPULCHRE - A place of burial; Tomb; Mausoleum.
- 253 SERAGLIO - Portion of the palace secluded for ladies.
- 254 SERAI/SARAI - Inn; this is generally situated on the outskirts of the city.
- 255 SHAFII. A school of Islamic jurisprudence. See fiqh.
- 256 SHAFT - Portion of a pillar or column between base and capital.
- 257 SHAIKH. "Old man." A term used for a Sufi (q.v.) who guided disciples.
Also used to denote a caste or class among Indian Muslims.
- 258 SHARIAT (Sharia). The law of Islam, comprising all the rules that govern life.
- 259 Sheath of 8,12,16,24 or 32 lotus petals used to crown the dome.
- 260 SHIA. The Muslim sect that asserts the leadership of Islam is hereditary in the descendants of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet. It is the dominant group in Iran, and is well represented in India.
- 261 SHIQQ. In the sultanate, the administrative district corresponding to the later sarkar (q.v.).
- 262 SHISH MAHAL - Palace complex internally decorated entirely with Glass Mosaic.
- 263 SIPAH-SALAR. A military rank during the sultanate, but under Akbar the name was used for a provincial governor.
- 264 SOFFIT - Underside of any architectural member.
- 265 SPANDREL (SPANDRIL) - Ornamental triangular space enclosed by the curve of an arch, and the square enclosing
- 266 SQUINCH - An arch placed diagonally at internal angles of the square room.
- 267 STALACTITE - Honey combing; it appears to have originated in the multiplication of small squinch arches on the pendentive.
- 268 STELLATE - Arranged like a star.
- 269 STRUT - Wood, stone or iron set up to bear weight or pressure.
- 270 STUCCO - A slow setting fine plaster on walls and vaults as a ground for relief ornamentation.

- 271 SUBAH. The term for the provinces into which the Mughal empire was divided. The subadar was the governor. This word was later used for the administrator of a smaller district.
- 272 SUFI. An Islamic mystic. Sufism, with its emphasis on the possibility of unity with the divine, was of special importance in winning converts to Islam in India.
- 273 SULTAN. King, ruler. In its early usage, the term implied dependence on the caliph (q.v.). The Delhi sultans sought recognition from the Abbasid caliphate, and even after its destruction they maintained a nominal connection with the Egyptian ruler who claimed to be the caliph.
- 274 SUNNI. An inherent of the majority, or "orthodox," Islamic sect that accepted the Abbasid rulers as caliphs, in contrast to the Shias (q.v.). "Sunna" means the custom or traditions associated with Muhammad, and its usage implies that the Sunni follow the canonical tradition.
- 275 SUPER-STRUCTURE - Portion of a building above the main storey.
- T**
- 276 TAFSIR. Explanation. The commentaries on the Quran and the science of its interpretation. Tafsir was an important branch of learning in the madrasas (q.v.).
- 277 TALUKA (Taluk). A name for a subdivision of a province in the late Mughal empire.
- 278 TAWHID. "Asserting oneness." A theological term that refers to the oneness of God.
- 279 TEHSIL (tahsil). The collection of land revenue. Later applied to a subdivision of a district.
- 280 TERRACED-GARDEN - A garden laid on different levels generally in regular descending stages allowing the water through the respective water devices to flow from higher level to the lower.
- 281 TIBARA - Generally used for three arched dalan on the ground floor opening on an inner court.

282 TRABEATED - The style of architecture in which horizontal beams and lintels are used in construction.

283 TRACERY - Architectural ornamental work in stone to fill up a window

284 TREFOIL - An arch with three cusps.

285 TURRETS - Small towers without stairways attached to the angles of a building.

U

286 ULAMA. Learned men, plural of alim. Used particularly for those learned in Islamic studies, or for the theologians who were guardians of Islamic custom.

287 UMARA. Nobles. Plural of amir (q.v.).

288 URDU. Literally, camp. The "camp-language" that grew up through an infusion of Persian, and some Arabic and Turkish, words into Hindi, the language of the Delhi region.

V

289 VAKIL. See wakil.

290 VASE-AND-FOLIAGE - Full vase with over flowing vegetation.

291 VAULT - An arched covering in stone or brick over any building

292 VESTIBULE - An anteroom or entrance hall.

293 VOUSSOIRS - Wedge shaped blocks of stone or brick forming an true arch.

294 VYALA - Composite animals for surface decoration.

W

295 WAHHABI. Follower of the community founded by Abdul Wahhab (1703-1787) in Arabia. The aim of the Wahhabis is to purify Islam of all innovations and to return to the strict observances of Islamic law. It is the dominant sect in Saudi Arabia. The beliefs of the Wahhabis, especially the strong emphasis on the removal of all non-Islamic practices, had considerable influence in India in the nineteenth century.

296 WAKIL (vakil). The office of the wakil or wakil-i-dar under the sultanate was concerned with the management of the royal household. In the Mughal

period, however, the wakil or wakil-i-sultanat, was the chief minister, the post formerly held by the wazir (q.v.).

- 297 WAQF. An endowment, usually in the form of lands, for the upkeep of a mosque, madrasa, or some other religious enterprise.
- 298 WAZIR. The chief minister of the Delhi sultans. Under the Mughals, the title was sometimes used for the official in charge of revenue and finance.
- 299 WING - Side of a hall
- 300 WIZARAT. The office of the wazir.

Z

- 301 ZAKAT. A tax collected from Muslims for charitable purposes.
- 302 ZAMINDAR. Literally, "a landholder," from zamin, land. Under the Mughals, he was a revenue official who had no proprietary rights in the land from which he collected taxes.
- 303 ZIMMI (dhimmi). A non-Muslim living in a Muslim state. According to a strict interpretation of the Islamic law, only Jews and Christians were eligible for the status of zimmi. Each adult male zimmi had to pay jizya (q.v.). In practice, when Muslims conquered a country they tolerated others than the "Peoples of the Scripture." This was particularly true in India, where the Hindus were treated as zimmis.

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There are two entrances, approached by broad flights of steps. The one on the east side is the Emperor's Gate, by which Akbar entered the mosque from the palace, and the other, the majestic Baland Darwaza, or High Gate, which towers above everything on the south side, and even dwarfs the mosque itself with its giant proportions. The latter gate, however, was not a part of the original design, but was added many years after the completion of the mosque, to celebrate Akbar's victorious campaign in the Deccan.¹²⁶



This lavishly decorated mosque marks the phase of transition in Islamic art, by using various indigenous architectural elements with efficacy. The façade composition of the building comprises of pillared dalan, with beautiful chhajja supporting on brackets and the chhatri on the roof, making an impressive skyline. The main iwan of the building is rather simple and contains a central arch, which is framed with the panels containing geometrical designs. The iwan contain three arched openings, which are also